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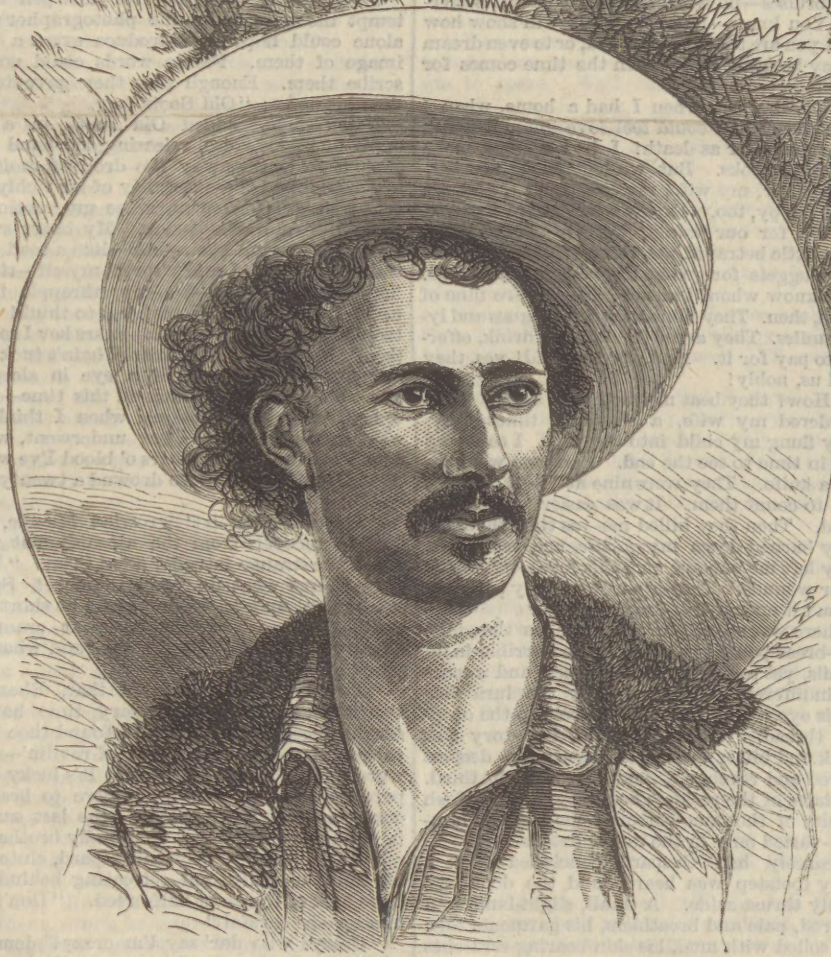
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A mounted Sioux dashed up behind the youth, leaped lightly to the ground, and threw himself upon the boy.



RIFLE AND TOMAHAWK;

NED WYLDE THE BOY SCOUT
BY TEXAS JACK

CHAPTER I.

THE GRAVE IN THE COTTONWOOD.

A boy lay fast asleep beneath the shelter of three cottonwoods. The hour was bordering upon midnight, and he slept soundly, as though worn out with a long tramp—a weary tracking of a faint trail leading toward the Big Horn Mountains—the Switzerland of the mighty West.

His garments were worn and travel-stained, and his face and hands browned by exposure to wind, and rain, and sun.

Suddenly the sleeper awoke with a slight start, as though some grim shadow had flitted through his dreams, or a presentiment of coming evil had clutched at his heart.

Yet still he lay as motionless and silent as though dead; but his eyes were wide open, his ears strained to catch the slightest sound.

Around him was only darkness, while like

grim specters of the night the trees towered above him.

All was silence, except the rustling of the leaves, stirred by the wind, and the gurgling of the little stream, on the bank of which he had pitched his solitary camp.

Presently there came to his waiting ears the sound of troops upon the prairie.

Was it a herd of buffalo? a squadron of troops? a band of Indians?

Which, he could not tell; but something, or some one was coming, though yet afar off.

Gathering his rifle and fixings together, he prepared to be ready to meet either friend or foe.

Stealing quietly from his position under the cottonwoods, he sought a sheltered spot in the thicket near by, that studded a neck of lowland, half-surrounded by a bend in the stream.

Then, from beyond the tree-tops peered the moon, lighting up the prairie with a flood of

silvery beauty, and casting the timber-land still more in shadow.

Nearer and nearer came the hoofs, and the boy crouched lower and lower; his breath came softer and softer, and his clutch upon his repeating rifle grew stronger and stronger, while his flashing eyes glanced out upon the prairie, to discover what was before him.

Boy that he was, not yet out of his teens, there was no shrinking, no fear, upon his brave, handsome, determined face.

At length three horsemen came swiftly over the prairie crest, and the moonlight falling full in their faces showed that they were white.

Still the boy made no motion; he had lived long enough upon the wild frontier to know that white men might prove as evil enemies to him as the red-skin, and he still remained upon his guard.

Nearer they came, and the better look he had of them caused the boy to feel that though they had white faces they had black hearts, and he crouched still lower, and grasped his rifle with steadier nerve.

Pressing forward rapidly, the three men headed almost directly for the spot where the boy lay concealed—two of them riding loose and free, the third carrying a heavy burden across his saddle.

The moonlight sifted right into the faces of the three men, and the boy soon could see their very features.

First, apparently the leader, rode a young man of perhaps twenty-five years of age, of medium size, and dressed in border style, with carbine slung at his back, and knife and revolver in his belt, while his face was almost hidden beneath a long, heavy beard, yet it seemed haggard, calm and desperate.

Next came a heavily-built man, who looked neither to the right nor left, but rode straight-forward with stolid face, evil eyes and set lips.

The third, who was charged with the burden, was tall, gaunt, and his face was concealed, except his gleaming eyes and thin nose, by his long, matted hair and beard.

Constantly his eyes glanced to either side and behind him, with a wild, restless look, but never in front of him, for here they would fall upon the ghastly burden he carried.

The burden he bore, and an unpleasant sight to look upon, was a woman—motionless, senseless, a gash across her throat, a wound upon her forehead.

Now and then a single drop of the not yet congealed blood fell upon the prairie, and to this hollow-eyed man it seemed that he could hear it drop, for he would start, glance more nervously around, shake the reins of his horse, and push blindly on in the wake of the others.

Nearer and nearer they came to the timber, until at last they halted, not twenty paces away from the boy.

"Here is the place," said the leading rider, pointing toward the thicket; "wait until I see

if any one has sought shelter here for the night."

As he spoke the man threw himself from his horse, and noiselessly glided into the timber, passing within a few feet of the boy, who, in breathless wonder, was crouched down, as silent and motionless as the bleeding form across the saddle.

A short while passed away—the two men uttering no word, the blood still dripping slowly upon the prairie, and the scene as silent as a graveyard at midnight.

Then the man returned, as noiselessly as he had disappeared, and approaching the horseman who bore the ghastly burden, he said, in low, deep tones:

"Give it to me; the coast is clear. Daniel, you bring the spade. We will leave our horses here, for mine will not stray, I know."

Then he took "it" from the tall man, who handed the limp form with averted face and a visible shudder.

A moment after the three strode into the timber, the leader bearing the woman's form.

The boy viewed all this with intense interest. Something terrible had been done! Perhaps something as terrible was to follow.

He was burning with curiosity—consuming with a desire to know more—and, if it cost him his life, he determined to attempt a solution of the mystery; so, nerving himself to his task, he glided softly on after the three men.

Soon the hum of voices warned him that those he followed had halted, and creeping forward he beheld a small opening in the timber—a space free from undergrowth, and carpeted with a rich growth of grass.

"Here is the spot—just under the ashes of this old camp-fire—now go to work and dig."

It was the leader who spoke, and the three men stood in the opening, the moonlight struggling through leafy branches, and falling lightly upon them.

The tall man seized the shovel, carefully scraped away the ashes and began to dig up the rich, black earth.

In turn the others relieved him, until the grave was ready—a shallow sepulcher, not two feet in depth.

Then the body of the woman was placed in the little trench, and arranged with a mecare;—a few branches and green leaves were spread upon it, and the dirt was shoveled back, and the ashes spread over the top, while the surplus dirt was carried off and thrown into the stream.

"If the ground sinks in, it will be believed to have been hollowed out for a camp-fire," and the leader turned away.

As his two comrades moved away into the shadow, again, he turned back, and with arms folded across his broad breast, stood silently looking down upon the spot, beneath which lay a woman's form.

A moment he stood thus, and then he, too, turned away and disappeared.

A few moments more passed, and the boy heard the tread of hoofs upon the prairie, as the men sped away from the corpse that lay buried in the thicket of Sand Stream Trace.

The boy listened for awhile to the departing hoof-strokes, and then, springing from his lurking-place, began, with quivering, eager hand to dig into the ground that covered the form of the woman.

Here was a mystery, and possibly a crime;—he would not rest until he knew more of it, and he clutched out the dirt with trembling fingers—he scraped and tore with nervous fury.

Soon, something cold and clammy touched his fingers;—he started, and the sweat dropped like beads from his face.

Then he reached down once more, put forward his hand, and grasped that of the woman.

By one effort he conquered the sudden thrill of repugnance, and raised the hand from the loose dirt.

It was cold, hard, clammy.

Then his eyes went down into the grave, and a gleam of light met them—a light that shimmered in the silvery ray that the moon cast down upon the spot.

A motion of the cold hand, and another sparkle of light.

"It is a diamond upon her finger!—what can this mean?"

"Surely these men were no robbers. I must see the face," and he bent again to his task, again dragged the earth from the grave.

Suddenly he stopped, and his head was raised, his ears strained to catch some sound.

A second more and he sprang to his feet, for off upon the prairie was heard wild war-cries, the clatter of the hoofs of a hundred ponies, the angry crack of rifles, and a wild shout of defiance, that the boy somehow felt certain came from the lips of the young man who had been the leader in the strange burial in the thicket.

The noise and the danger came upon him like a cloud-burst; the dead woman, and the mystery hanging over her, faded away before personal necessities, personal peril, and seizing his rifle, the boy bounded from the half-open grave and rushed headlong from the thicket.

CHAPTER II.

A BOY AT BAY.

THE name of the young man who had been the leader, at the secret burial told of in the foregoing chapter, was Hart Moline—at least, that was the appellation by which, by common consent of those who best knew him, he was oftenest called.

He had done desperate work on several occasions in the border-towns—was a wild, reckless, free-and-easy fellow, ready on the instant with knife and revolver, and roamed through prairie, camp, settlement and mountain at will;

while of his past life, prior to his appearance on the frontier, several years before, nothing was known, and, as it was, his face was familiar to more men than he cared to know.

When Hart Moline remained for awhile at the grave, his two companions did not wait for his coming, but mounted their horses and dashed away, leaving the steed of their leader still patiently awaiting his rider.

An instant after that Moline came from the thicket into the bright moonlight, and cast but a cursory glance after his retreating comrades.

He then took from his face the heavy beard, evidently worn as a disguise, leaving his handsome, but reckless, features visible, the stern mouth shaded by a long, silken mustache.

Throwing the rein of his steed over his arm, he walked thoughtfully up the incline which led to the bank of the stream.

Reaching the crest of the divide he stood intently gazing over the plain, seeing, yet unconsciously so, the forms of his late followers growing dim with distance.

Then a sigh broke from his stern lips, and folding his arms he turned, his eyes upward, gnawed the ends of his mustache viciously, and seemed endeavoring to look beyond the silvery moon and twinkling stars.

Long he stood thus, unmindful of a dark form creeping along the low bottom-land at his back; his thoughts were in the clouds, his eyes upon the stars.

Presently a curse, half-aloud, half-hissed, came from his lips, and he turned with an impatient gesture and swung himself into his saddle.

That movement saved his life, for as he did so a rifle-bullet sung above his head, and a burst of wild yells recalled him to consciousness of the outer world, in a manner decidedly unpleasant.

A wild cry of defiance burst from his lips, and his horse shot away, without waiting for gathering of rein or word of command; the noble animal knew both his duty and his rider.

His duty was to get out of harm's way as speedily as possible, and his rapid gait made him seem to skim over the ground like a bird.

But the moonlight rendered horse and rider a fair target for the Sioux in pursuit, who, with one accord, opened upon the white man with bow and arrow.

As the deadly hail swept around him and over him, Hart Moline bent low in his saddle and urged on his horse to greater speed.

At first he seemed inclined to return the fire with his repeating rifle; but, what mattered it whether there was a Sioux more or less in the chase? Besides, to bring down any of their number would but make the pursuit more bitter and lasting.

"The red devils are in earnest," he muttered, as he flew along, his keen eyes narrowly watching to see if some of his foes were not heading him off in the dark and gloomy places which lay in black lines across the prairie, at the foot of the divide.

"That girl laid a trap for me, I verily believe, and I walked right into it; I was a fool to trust her."

"Ha! how they come on! but their pines will soon feel this pace; if not, I shall have to open on them ere I reach yonder line of timber, where I will be safe, if I have to desert poor Swift."

Perhaps Swift heard and understood the soliloquy of his master, for he at once put on an extra spurt of speed and the distance between pursued and pursuers rapidly increased, until Moline felt that he was out of range of arrow and lance.

His course lay parallel with the divide, and at length he reached the crest and looked backward.

As he did so he was in the dark shadow of the timber-line, flash after flash succeeding each other in rapid succession, and followed by a confused medley of yells.

Drawing rein, Hart Moline faced to the rear and gazed attentively back toward the thicket.

Not half a mile away he beheld his pursuers, who had also come to a halt, their attention diverted from him by the contest going on in their rear.

Seeing their inability to overtake the horseman, they at once set off on the back track, determined to join their brother warriors in the attack at the thicket.

"Some one is at bay yonder. I will also take the back trail," murmured Hart Moline, and he started at an easy gallop toward the thicket.

It held a strange attraction for him, and he wished to see what white man was lingering near the little opening where was hidden the lonely grave.

But it was no white man whose rifle rattled forth death-knells with such marvelous rapidity; but a white boy—Ned Wyldie—whom the reader has already met.

When the boy dropped the hand of the buried woman, and sprung away, his first intention was to take to the river-bank and follow closely its course, for, versed in plaincraft, he knew that, for purpose of concealment, the bluffs upon either side offered the best place of refuge.

Striking deeper into the gloom he heard answering yells upon the river-bank, and well knew that escape in that direction was effectually barred, so he turned quickly and hastened along upstream, following a line parallel to that taken by Hart Moline.

He ran lightly and fast, and was making good progress, when he discovered in front of him, and blocking his way, an Indian camp.

At the same time he heard sounds from the other side of the river, and from the timber through which he had just passed, which now seemed alive with red-skinned, pressing on in the direction of the spot where he stood.

In a few moments they would sweep him up in their circle and his life would go out, if he did not quickly make some supreme effort to escape.

Like a deer he suddenly bounded away to the woods, pushing hard for the edge of the forest, for it seemed to him that he might make his way through the long grass of the bottom-land, and regain the open prairie.

But the pursuers in the timber pressed the boy more closely, and sounds of alarm were heard in the village, while the savage bay of hounds added to the desperation of his situation.

Then the boy grew reckless, and he leaped from the timber to risk his chances upon the open plain.

But this proved to be a perilous movement, at an inauspicious moment, for a long line of horsemen was winding its way along, not far from the spot where he broke cover, and quick eyes at once caught sight of him; the line quivered, and half a hundred braves wheeled their ponies and charged down upon him, and Ned Wyldie was in deadly danger.

"We'll die game right here," the boy said to himself, with cool determination and ready firmness, far beyond what might be expected from one of his years.

Glancing around him he beheld a slight hol-

low in the prairie, and springing into it, he dropped on one knee and commenced his murderous fire, for, armed with the Evans repeating rifle, carrying thirty-four shots, he felt his ability to surprise, if not to kill the Indians in their attack upon him.

One, two, three and the right end of the approaching line dropped off with magical quickness.

Four, five, six! and the sharp, wicked reports almost blended, while the center of the advancing line staggered badly.

Seven! and a pony and brave went down. But now a wild yell broke from the redskins—they were accustomed to the seven-shot Spencer rifle, and they felt their foe at their mercy—his rifle was empty, they thought, and with demoniacal cries of cruel joy, they came on.

But not the iron tube of destruction was not lowered from the boy's shoulder, and yet there followed eight, nine, ten! in rapid succession.

At, and like a rattling volley the savage cracks followed, and with deadly effect to Indian pony and red-skin rider, until, surprised, shattered, bleeding, and with dying and dead left on their trail, the live halted, quivered, surged backward, and left the boy—proud, excited, defiant, and flushed with victory.

But at this moment a mounted Sioux dashed up behind the youth, leaped lightly to the ground, and threw himself upon the surprised boy.

But the boy was born with a natural gift for a hand-to-hand fight—was wiry as a leopard, slippery as an eel, and the Sioux, who thought the trouble was over, was terribly mistaken, for the butt of the rifle struck him fairly upon the jaw, and then followed a dull, ominous crashing—the grip of the red-skin loosened, and he fell backward to the ground.

But the boy did not tarry now, for, without a pause, he leaped over the red-skin, and seized the rein of the hardy-looking little brown pony that stood motionless at the spot where his master had left him.

With an agile spring, he flung himself upon the back of the pony, and with a defiant yell, urged him away at full speed, followed by a score of yelling Sioux.

CHAPTER III.
A DISCOVERY AND SURPRISE.

As the noise of pursuit rolled away up the river, a horseman came cautiously down through a buffalo water-trail that broke the low bluff on the opposite side of the stream.

His eyes were restlessly glancing around him, his ears strained to catch the sounds of the chase after the boy, and which were waxing fainter in the distance.

Halting in the buffalo trail, he seemed endeavoring to pierce with his keen eyes the gloomy shadows that lay before him on the other shore, and as the moonlight fell upon him, it displayed a man of fine physique and fearless face, dressed in buckskin, and thoroughly armed.

A single glance at rider and horse was sufficient to show a well-mounted, well-armed border scout—one who was venturing into the very den of his red foes.

"Duty demands it, and I must not shrink," he muttered, and after allowing his steed to refresh himself with a draught of water, he pushed resolutely into the stream, and struck out for the other shore.

Arriving upon the other bank, he marked out his course without hesitation, as though acquainted with the surroundings, and cautiously pressed on into the thicket at the very point where Hart Moline and his companions had entered.

With cautious pace he rode on, until his practiced eye soon fell upon a recent trail across the small opening in the glade.

Dismounting quickly, he narrowly scanned the ground, and following, like a hound on the scent, he the next instant came upon a slight which caused him to quiver with a thrill of astonishment.

From the dark ground a little eye of fire seemed looking up at him, and stooping over, he beheld, protruding from the ground, a bare arm, the fingers of the hand working convulsively.

Recovering quickly from the shock produced by the terrible discovery, the scout knelt at the side of the grave, and with hasty, nervous hands, proceeded to tear away the earth from above the form of an evidently living woman.

Realizing the terrible danger that lay before him, he worked with fierce haste, he pulled, he tore, he tugged, and at length the buried form lay before him.

The next instant he raised the woman in his strong arms, and bore her swiftly to where he had left his horse.

A moment more he was mounted and making his way cautiously back over the route he had come, unmindful now of the orders that had sent him scouting about the Sioux camp.

As he forded the river, he stooped over and dashed water into the face of the woman he held upon his arm.

Whether she would come back to consciousness was a question he could not answer until he gave a closer examination to her condition; but certain it was that his duty to do all for her in his power was plain, and he was anxious to get at a safe distance from the dangerous neighborhood in which he then was.

Following the line of river for some distance, he at length branched off toward a range of hills not far away, and a ride of a few moments brought him to a narrow canyon, through which flowed the rivulet of a spring further up.

Seeking a secluded spot, he dismounted with his burden, and laying the slender, graceful form upon a grassy knoll, for the first time narrowly scanned the face of the woman whom, by such a strange chance, he had torn, yet alive, from the grave in the thicket.

The moonlight fell full upon the upturned, pallid face, and with a startled cry the man sprung back, exclaiming:

"Good God! Marian May! You here!"

Turning half-away the scout seemed undecided, and at the same time his strong frame quivered with emotion.

Perhaps it was the sound of a voice once heard before, or the effects of the cool water upon her face; but there swept a terror through the form, the eyes half-opened, the lips parted, and again the woman seemed unconscious.

With stern, heavy tread the scout paced to and fro, his brow dark, his eyes glowing, and his teeth set firm.

Whether she lived or died, seemed now, by his strange manner, a matter of little moment. The ghastly object, that but a few moments before had swerved him from the line of his duty, now lay unscathed before his eyes.

At length the scout turned once more toward the motionless form; one way or the other, he had made up his mind as to the course he would pursue.

Approaching the woman with a firm step and hard face, he set about examining her wounds with real surgical skill.

There was a cruel gash on the shapely throat, a bruise or two on the forehead; what the result might be seemed doubtful.

With rest, perfect quiet, and a strong constitution, it might be life; as things were, the chances seemed more favorable for death.

In a few moments the wounds were gently bathed and bandaged; and then the full lips were moistened from time to time with a few drops of brandy from the scout's canteen.

Then he sat down to wait—it was all that he could do.

The pendulum of life at length came swinging back, with a gradually increasing strength of stroke; the white life began to show color, the eyelids to move, the breath to come and go with a soft, regular movement.

Holding his fingers upon the delicate wrist, the scout sat like a statue in the moonlight, watching and waiting, while his brave, handsome face seemed cold as marble, and grim specters of past memories trooped before him; the face he gazed upon recalled an embittered bygone—it reopened a wound in his heart he had hoped was forever healed.

Suddenly a shadow fell upon him, and glancing quickly up the scout half-sprung to his feet; but a cry of warning caused him to remain motionless, his eyes riveted upon a form not ten feet distant.

That form was a young Indian girl of wondrous beauty.

Yet her attitude was hostile, for in her hands she held a bow, drawn back with the full strength of her arm—fitted for deadly work, was a long, keen arrow, and it covered the heart of the scout; a second more, a quiver of a muscle, and it might pierce his heart in search of life.

(To be continued.)

WE NEVER CAN BE FRIENDS AGAIN.

BY ADDIE D. ROLLISTON.

I kissed the lips I deemed so pure
The proud, sweet lips that trembled so,
And with a nameless, bitter pain,
I saw your fair face whiter grow;
But now I think with scorn intense
Of that past hour of grief and pain,
For we have sundered every tie,
And never can be friends again!

The fairest rose that blossoms sweet
Conceals ofttimes a cruel thorn,
And on the softest tenderest hands
Are by its cruel sharpness torn.
And my one rose leaf, for long years,
Bargain for your kisses—there is no cure
For a hot tongue like cold steel.
We never can be friends again!

It was not with the passion bold
That marks the lover's tender tone,
I sought to win your sweetest thoughts
And call your love my very own.
But it was friendship's magic voice
That lured me in her silken chain;
But we have broken every tie,
And never can be friends again!

Yet, sometimes, when the days grow dark—
When somber storm-clouds darkly lower—
I'll drop one fond, regretful tear,
And think of you and all your power.
Ah! once I deemed our friendship sweet
Could by no selfish hand be slain,
But we have sundered every tie,
And never can be friends again!

Mayhap the future years will bear
Your life so far away from mine
That gleams of brightness from the past
On larger on your path will shine.
Then seek I pray, no more for peace
In memories that bring but pain,
For we have broken every tie,
And never can be friends again!

BIG GEORGE,
The Giant of the Gulch:

OR,
THE FIVE OUTLAW BROTHERS.

BY JOS. E. BADGER, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "LITTLE VOLCANO, THE BOY MINER," "OLD BULL'S-EYE," "PACIFIC PETE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.
TROUBLE BREWING IN ANOTHER QUARTER.

RATHER wild than picturesque, curious than attractive, was the little collection of brush jacks, dingy canvas tents and rickety, tumble-down shanties, known far and near by the name of Spanish Quarter, or "Greaser Flat."

It lies very quiet, now, under the warm rays of the afternoon sun. A few men, an occasional woman or child may be seen, lying prone in the grateful shade, or lazily passing to and fro. But all is still. This is but the hour before dawn with the inhabitants of Greaser Flat. Night birds are the only one and all. As the twilight deepens the roosts give forth their birds of prey. There is no silence then. Yells, curses and shrieks; the sound of clashing steel, of pistol shots; the shrill peal of laughter, the twanging of guitars or mandolin mingling with the soft notes of a love-song. Torchlights and bonfires light up the mad yet curious scene.

Here stands a gold-laden table in open air, surrounded by a group of eager gamblers of his life, while his murderer, with yet red hands, laughingly boasts of his exploit.

A bold, reckless man is he who ventures alone into Greaser's Flat, after the sun goes down, without other safeguard than his own strong arm.

Three years before the date of this story, when the world of California was electrified by the wonderful richness of the "find" that gave birth to the gay little town of Blue Earth, the grand rush which followed, as a matter of course, attracted those birds of prey—gamblers, thieves and cutthroats, the scourge of all mining towns. For a time they had rare pickings, but, finally, they waxed too audacious, and Judge Lynch arose in his might and overthrew them—sending the bodies of a round dozen among the worst a great deal higher than their souls would ever soar.

This gentle hint was not ignored. The survivors bade the late scene of their glory adieu, and purloined for more congenial climes. The majority, that is, a few settled down where the river made an abrupt bend, some three miles from Blue Earth, where they were allowed to remain, unmolested. From this nucleus sprang the Spanish Quarter. All honest men felt it a burning shame that such an eyeshore should flourish so near them, but no decided steps were taken to remedy the evil, and their numbers steadily increased until now, at the day of which I write, Greaser Flat sheltered full two hundred fighting men.

Beneath that sultry Sabbath sun, Greaser Flat seemed to slumber. A foul-looking, foul-smelling place. Garbage and filth choked the narrow, crooked passage between the rude buildings. Even the few wolfish-looking curs lounged about with drooping tail and blinking eyes, too lazy to fight the legions of fleas which they shared with their masters.

From one cabin—a brush-walled jacale—alone came the low sound of human voices. Four men were within—Mexicans all, though

two at least bore negro blood in their veins—*mezizoes*.

One lay upon a pile of hay, moving restlessly, now cursing viciously, now moaning with pain. The others squatted upon the ground, a greasy pack of cards between them, conversing eagerly between the intervals of play, paying little attention to the complaints of their wounded comrade, only pausing to curse his groans, when they grew too troublesome.

Not one of the quartette ran any danger of ever being hung for his beauty. Stout enough fellows, one and all, with evil written in capitals upon every feature, and plainly visible through the marks of dirt, smoke and grease, the marks of drunkenness and unbridled passion, the scars of many a wild fight and reckless melee.

"Curse that Jose!" snarled the sick man, grating his teeth. "Why don't he come back? He is lying drunk in some ditch—the bound! That is his love for his brother—the way he keeps his oath of vengeance! And you—smoking curs! With your cards, your liquor, your smoke—like swine in a mudhole—so you laugh at our bond, while I lie here, a helpless cripple, and he—Mary, Mother, grant that he sup with Satan this night! He, the one who has done this, goes free and laughs at the work of his hands!"

"And if he laughs, he has earned the right," coolly retorted a huge half-breed, with only one eye and half a nose, as he shuffled the cards. "Let a man laugh when he wins, and while he can. It will not last long—his chance. There's a good man on his track; a quick eye, a sure hand, a cool brain and a swift foot to back them. Don't be impatient. When Jose takes the trail he is like a bloodhound—hard to shake off. As for your hurts, grin and bear them, as you have borne worse ones. You will soon be afoot and ready for work. Think of that, and act like a man!"

"Like a man! Ay! as you did, Muerte, last night! As you and Jose, and Diaz, and Gaspard—as men and heroes, as true brothers in blood and oath! You all acted like men when that overgrown devil flung me against the wall. You remembered your oath, then—blood for blood, life for life! Bah! and the injured wretch ended with a bitter, scornful curse."

"Brothers or not, oaths or no oaths, you mustn't let your tongue carry you too far, Peluchio Silva," retorted the half-breed, his goggle eyes glowing with a dangerous fire, his thick lips curling away from the long, pointed teeth as he spoke. "If we do your work, we did not bargain for your curses. There is no cure for a hot tongue like cold steel. A hint to a wise man is enough—and you are no fool, if you would only give yourself fair play. If we held our hands last night, it was only to deal a sure stroke. There were too many around who knew us—who would have been only too glad of a chance to measure our hearts with their knives. It is only a fool who snaps at a leg beyond his reach, instead of waiting until he is sure of his mouthful. You say we are false to our oaths. Does it look like it? At daydawn Jose took the trail. He will never leave it until he kills. If he fails—for man is but mortal—then it will be my turn. And after me, Diaz; then Gaspard. Is not that enough? Are you the only one whose tongue is dry to lick his heart's blood? Bah! a few bruises—no worse! I—what have I suffered! You know—but listen. It will show how mad you are to call me coward, or to even dream of my hanging back when the time comes for striking."

"The day was when I had a home, when I had a heart that could feel love—now it is full of ashes, bitter as death! I had a home, poor enough in looks. But we had enough to eat, my mother, my wife, my child and I, and we were happy, too. I knew where there was gold enough for our wants, but we needed little. That little betrayed me, though. They saw me pay nuggets for goods, they dogged me home. You know whom I mean. There were nine of them, then. They came with soft tongues and lying smiles. They asked for food and drink, offering to pay for it. And pay they did! yes, they paid us, nobly!"

"How! they beat my mother to death. They murdered my wife, a thousand times over. They flung my child into the fire. I came up just in time to see the end. I had no weapons but a knife. They were nine at first. I didn't stop to count them. It was easier work afterward. Then they killed me—as they thought. They burned down my jacale, and my dead. They left me one eye and this face—with fifty other wounds. That is the way they paid us. Wasn't it enough?"

There was silence for a minute, as the giant half-breed paused in his story, so horrible in its details, yet told with such coldness and apparent indifference, belied only by the lurid fire in his eyes. But then another took up the dropped thread. If less frightful, his story was black and bitter enough to justify the deepest hatred and revenge. And after him, the third. All tales of the reckless brutality and devilish cruelty of the same persons—the Pepper family—varied only in the minor details.

Scarcely had Gaspard concluded when a hasty footstep was heard, and the door was rudely thrust aside. A small, slight-built man entered, pale and breathless, his garments torn and soiled with mud, his skin bearing scratches and scars, as of a hasty flight through brush and brake, over hill and down dale.

Hastily grasped weapons were dropped as they recognized the intruder, and hasty questions were poured upon him from four pairs of lips. He answered nothing until he had drained the leathern flask of liquor, and dropped to the ground.

"The devil is in it!" he snarled, plunging his long knife half-deep into the ground. "As fair a shot as ever man had—I covered his heart with a bead that would have spoiled a dollar at twice the distance—curses on the bullet that failed me!"

"Don't say he escaped you, Jose—don't say that, or I'll curse the hour our mother bore such a child!" screamed the wounded man, fairly foaming at the mouth.

"Didn't you hear me say so, you winning fool!" snarled Jose. "What care I for your curses! I did all that man could do. I dogged him from place to place, waiting for a sure chance. It came, as I thought. He stood in the open door, in full view. I covered his heart. I fired. He gave a yell, and fell. I believed my work was done. But Satan stood his friend and held back the lead from his chest—or else he wears armor beneath his clothes. He got up. They saw me, and came after me; the little imp, the big, red-haired beast, and the one with the long hair. Their yells and their pistol-shots woke up the town. Before I reached the top of the hill, over a hundred men were on my track. I gave them all the slip, but it was hard work. I led them a long chase toward Celestial City, then threw them off the scent, and doubled back here. There—you have my story. I did the best I knew how, and if one of you dare say I bungled at it, I'll make him swallow the length of my machete!"

"You have done well, Jose," quietly uttered Muerte, extending his hand. "All men make

mistakes sometimes, and we don't blame you. Only—let it be a lesson to us in dealing with these brother brutes; we will send our lead at their brains, the next time. They can't wear concealed armor there."

"Did they recognize you, think?" asked Diaz. "I think not. I led them away from here, on purpose. They will lay it to some other of their enemies. But if they did, what matter! How many men could they get to follow them here? I only wish they would come—then we would make sure work."

"And—since there could be no hiding our hands then, what would the queen say?" muttered Gaspard.

"What she pleases," sullenly replied Jose. "Are we to remain dogs because she has taken a fancy for these born devils? Can not she find true hearts and stout hands enough among her own people to do her work, without turning to these accursed—?"

"Hist!" and Gaspard glanced suspiciously around. "Guard your tongue, Jose, if you would not lose it use forever! The very air has tongues to carry her news, I do believe!"

"I care not! I would even tell her as much, if I had occasion. She is only a woman at the best. Because we serve her is no reason why we should—"

He paused abruptly. A heavy, shambling footstep was heard without, drawing nearer and nearer; then the frail door was flung back with a rude hand.

CHAPTER XI.
"OLD BOOTS."

"WAL—I—ber-durned!"

Such were the words which greeted the Mexican conspirators as the door of the brush jacale was rudely flung open. A queer figure partially filled the entrance, supporting himself by grasping doorposts, while his projecting head was slowly swaying from side to side with a ludicrous expression of surprise and doubt.

Truly, an oddity even in that country of natural curiosities. Few persons could have passed him by without pausing for a second glance, and once met, he would never be forgotten.

Of his figure but little could be told, save that he was a trifle above the average height of man. Whether lean or corpulent, muscular or the contrary, symmetrical or deformed—could only be conjectured; all was hidden, buried beneath the mass of rags and tatters that fluttered with every passing breeze. Other men were ragged, but not like this. Other men were greasy, other men were dirty, and other men bore about with them the strong, mingled odors of bad tobacco and worse whisky; but they were as coyotes in the presence of a grisly. The rags and tatters seemed made for him, not he for them. They seemed part and parcel of his being. The keenest eye might search in vain for trace of the tailor's art. It required no great stretch of imagination to believe that the rags and tatters grew there, just as the feathers upon a bird. The only suspicion of style about him lay in his hat; it bore an entire brim, and at least half a crown. Yet, if the eye, in search of the picturesque, lingered here with a vague disappointment, ample amends were made at the other extremity.

Those boots! It is not for this pen to attempt the vain task—the photographer's art alone could hope to reproduce even a faint image of them. Feeble words could not describe them. Enough that they gave to the man his name: "Old Boots."

"Gen'lmen," added Old Boots, in a still more unctuous voice, releasing one hand long enough to brush away the drop of moisture which bedewed the extremity of his richly-colored nose. "Gen'lmen, excuse my 'motion on this—hic—'morable 'casion. My heart swells up in my buzzum like a—hic—like a toad in a thunder-storm. I can't 'spress myself—strong 'motions tickle my—hic—my thrapple till I can't speak. Moly Hoses! jest to think! Fer twenty long an' 'wary—hic—years he I sought thee! Fer twenty long years! hain't tuck bite nur sup—I hain't winked a eye in sleep—I hain't ett nur—hic—drunk all this time—gen'lmen, excuse my 'motions; when I think of what terrible sufferin' I hev in my heart, when I look back an' see the tears, blood I've weened—salt-water enough to drown a twenty-legged duck—"

"Thousand devils!" growled Muerte, with the first to recover from the astonishment with which the strange intruder filled them. "Who are you, and what do you want here? Speak out—quick! and let your tongue be short and straight, unless you would have it crammed down your throat! Speak! who and what are you?"

"Twenty years—think of that, Ebenezer Quackenbush! All that weary time have I sought thee, and now, hain't I found thee only to lose thee—to hear words of revilin'—cuse words! Ah, 'Neezer!—'Neezer! It's lucky your pore ole man an' pap ain't alive to hear ye cuss your own livin' brother—the last survivin' orphint of seventeen! your only brother—"

"He is crazy!" muttered Gaspard, clutching his knife uneasily, and retreating behind the huge bulk of the giant half-breed. "Don't stir him up—be careful!"

"Crazy? who dar' say I'm crazy?" demanded Old Boots, drawing his apparently boneless figure erect with a ludicrous assumption of dignity. "An' yet—I don't blame ye, young feller, fer thinkin' as much. Look at me—look me cuss an' clear through. What d' ye see? The shadow of a man, that's all. The time was—you've hearn tell of Theophilus Quackenbush—the last survivin' orphint of seventeen! I used to be him. That was years

"You ax what I know of them—that they be to me! I know they're Satan's own, body and soul. I know they're the blackest villains God ever let run loose. I know they've shed innocent blood enough to float a steamboat. I know that words can't beat to tell the hate they've done—"

"You speak strongly," interrupted the half-breed, with a peculiar laugh, returning his weapon to its sheath. "How do you know but we are their friends and comrades? Suppose we should—"

"Try it on!" coolly retorted Old Boots, leaning against the doorpost, while a brace of revolvers filled his hands as though by magic. "Four to one—I've faced as long odds afore now. Let her flicker, pard—"

"Put up your bulldogs, friend," laughed Muerte, with a grim satisfaction which he made no attempt to conceal. "I was only trying you, and I am satisfied. We, too, hate those devils, and have sworn to have their scalps. But—you say they have wronged you? Tell us how. It may be better for us both."

"I will. I know you, now. I saw how he was treated," nodding toward the injured Mexican. "That is why I come yere. I thought you'd like to hev revenging. But I got to thinkin'—thinkin'—an' it sent my head to hummin' an' a-buzzin', an' I fergot everythin' else but that black day—"

"Come in—sit down and tell us all about it," urged the half-breed.

He was obeyed, though Old Boots moved and looked like a man acting under the influence of a will other than his own. Squatting down beside the half-breed, he mechanically shuffled and fingered the greasy cards while he spoke, in a low, monotonous tone.

"They was only me an' Ebenezer left. We struck a rich claim. We worked hard an' was happy ontel they come. They wanted to buy us out—fer a song. We said no—that was all they wanted. We fit as well as we could; but they was six there. They murdered Eben—an' I was little better. They just kep' me in hopes I'd tell 'em whar our dust was cached; but they couldn't make me speak, only to cuss them. They tried all they knowed how. They tortur'd me wuss then Injuns 'd a' done. But they couldn't make me speak. They kep' it up ontel I went crazy—yes, I know now I was crazy. That's all I know, fer years. Tain't bin long since I knowed that much. Soon's I woke up, I swore I'd hev revenging. I set out lookin' fer 'em. I was a long an' a crooked trail, but I folloed it day by day ontel I run on 'em here. The sign of the mustel I set me crazy agin, fer I thought I heerd 'em callin' to me—callin' to me an' I couldn't come—You hain't got any pizen, hev ye? I'm drier'n a lime-kin!"

This abrupt transition seemed to startle the Mexicans, and for one moment Muerte believed this queer customer was playing with them; but the suspicion died as soon as conceived. His brief armor had died away, and Old Boots was once more the odd, whimsical bummer, whose lips clung to the mouth of the leather flask as though grown there.

"That's enough!" he gasped, licking his lips. "I don't ax no better interduccion. Men as totes scab flicker as that must be the right stripe. We're pardners from this on. I'll fight fer ye long's I kin drink—or play. Come! pleasure first—then business. Make your game, gen'l'men—make your game!"

As he spoke, Old Boots dextrously sorted the cards for a *monte* "lay-out," then produced a handful of gold coin from the midst of his rags, which he placed before him as his "bank." That was enough. Born gamblers, as indeed all Mexicans are—the cards and gold were sufficient to drive all else from their minds—even the wounded man crawling forward to take a part in the game.

An hour passed as one minute. The pile of gold before Old Boots steadily increased. He seemingly held fortune at his finger ends. It was only necessary for the players to bet against a certain card for it to turn up. Those dirty, discolored fingers played among the pasteboards like magic. Veterans though they were, the Mexicans could only stare in mute amazement—and disgust—as their pockets one by one were emptied, until their last coin joined the pile before Old Boots. Black looks passed between them. The dealer was in danger.

"That!" cried Old Boots, dropping the cards. "We've had fun enough. Take your gold, friends, an' call yourselves lucky we wasn't playin' in dead earnest. Take it," he added, as they seemed to hesitate. "Ef you don't we'll hev to quarrel. I've sworn never to play for keeps with friends an' pardners."

Not a little abashed at their baseless suspicions, the men secured their money.

"Now to business. You've all agreed them devils must go under. It only remains to settle the *how* an' *when*. I kin tell you that. I've got the hull thing out an' dried. The work 'll be dangerous, though of all goes right we kin take 'em from ahind, an' git in one good lick afore they think—"

Drawing closer together the five men conversed low and earnestly, for some minutes. Then they drew back, each man holding aloft a knife on which he swore a bitter and undying vengeance against the Pepper brothers.

CHAPTER XII.

LITTLE PEPPER PLAYS A TRUMP.

BREATHLESS with haste, Little Cassino entered the "Temple," and with an almost painful sigh of relief saw that he was not yet too late. Ben Coffee and George Mack were standing at the bar, drinking together, and from their unconcerned demeanor, it was plain that nothing out of the usual run had transpired.

"The very man I wanted to see!" cried Coffee, catching sight of the doctor. "I haven't been able to thank—"

"Drop that, old man!" sharply cried Little Cassino, with a warning glance. "You owe me nothing, not even thanks; remember that." "I owe you more, and if ever the chance comes, you'll see that I am ready to pay my debts," interposed the young gymnast. "I looked for you to-day, but you were too busy. If I knew what time to-morrow—"

"I don't want to hurry you, Mack, but it's near your time for going on, and you know how popular stage-waits are. Better go rig up," cautioned Coffee.

"I'll go help Mack. I'm an old hand at the biz," laughed Little Cassino, joining arms with the gymnast, then muttering hurriedly in his ear: "Don't make any sign. I've something of the utmost importance to tell you."

George Mack made no sign until they were safe within his little six-by-six dressing-room, then, securing the door:

"Now what is it? Some more devilry brewed by those hounds—"

"Just that; no less. But go on with your dressing. There is no real danger now that we know what to guard against, and as Coffee said, our digger lads are not famous for their patience."

"Speak quick, then," and Mack strove to choke down his excitement. "Is it about me, or—her?"

"I reckon what affects one wouldn't go far from touching the other," retorted Little Cassino, with a half-laugh. "But—now don't fly off the handle—this time it dears more particularly with the lady, Miss Estelle—"

"Curse them!" grated the gymnast, all affire. "It's that overgrown dog—that George Pepper—fool that I was not to have emptied his black heart when I had him in my power! But I'll do it—I'll not let another hour—"

"Yes you will—several of them," coolly retorted Little Cassino, planting himself against the narrow door. "I tell you it's all out and dried—the prettiest little job you ever see! We'll spring the trap at the right moment, but that moment hasn't come yet, and I'll not let you interfere to spoil sport. You owe me that much, at least."

"I owe you more than you think, perhaps," replied Mack, with an evident effort. "Since you wish it, I will be quiet. Only they mustn't cross my path. I'll not seek a fuss, nor will I avoid one."

"Nor am I the man to ask it. You just keep on your way, quietly; that's all I ask. I'll let you know all about it in time to take a hand in, if you want to. Well, that is settled, then. Now for the trick they are going to try on to-night. That you may know I speak by the card, I don't mind telling you that I overheard the whole plot, without their suspecting anything."

"Big George is at the bottom of it, of course. He is dead-gone—that is—you know—"

Little Cassino actually stammered and grew confused as the face of the gymnast grew harder and more stern.

"I understand, I know the whole story," he said, quietly. "I'll tell it to you, then you will have the rights of it. He—Big George—met Estelle at Sacramento. He appeared to be a gentleman, as he can be, when he tries, and lets whisky alone. They gradually became better acquainted, and she almost learned to like him—or rather what he seemed to be. But one evening he showed out in his true colors. He had been drinking, and—insulted her. She resented it, of course, and never would speak with him again. That made him worse, instead of better, and at last he persecuted her so that she left town, taking the night stage for Frisco. There I met her, and—well, you can guess the rest. She is my wife, now."

"And a lucky fellow you are, if the little I have seen of her is a fair sample," warmly cried Little Cassino, clasping the young man's hand. "I am doubly glad to hear it. I shall be more easy now, since I know you can watch over and guard her all the time."

"They must walk over me, first," said Mack. "I don't believe any one will try that twice. Now for the programme to-night. Big George hatched it, Red Pepper and Little stub-short are to carry it out—supposing we let 'em. Big George wrote a note, which he hopes will bring your wife up to the box they have taken. Then they are to carry her off, gagging her, if necessary—"

"I'll answer the note—let them gag me!" "No you don't—remember your promise. That would let them see that we know all their plans, and the time for that has not yet come. Let them read the note, and wait for their answer until their patience gives out. You just warn your wife—"

"You come with me; she made me promise to introduce you. Come—I have only a minute to spare. We'll find her in the green-room."

Nothing loth, Little Cassino followed the gymnast's lead, and in a few moments more was beside La Belle Estelle, whose greeting was warm enough to satisfy the most exacting. Her looks more than words told the doctor how intensely grateful she was for his services, and he felt his interest in the fair songstress redoubled, though he affected to make light of what he had done.

"Keep him with you until I come back, little one," said Mack, as the call-boy repeated his name for the third time. "I'll rush it through as quick as I can."

Little Cassino did not find it a very great hardship, this being kept prisoner by so fair a janitress. They conversed as freely as though their acquaintance dated from childhood, paying no attention to the covert whispers and giggling of several ballet-girls who occupied one end of the room.

But their *tele-a-tele* was speedily interrupted. A sharp, shrill cry—a heavy fall—then a wild outcry!

Meantime Red Pepper and his dwarf brother had not been so idle as would appear at first glance. Among the first they had entered the "Temple," and paying for a box, had seated themselves to await the proper moment for action. Despite the business on hand, which might turn out a more troublesome affair than they had at first anticipated, Little Pepper gave himself up to the enjoyments of the hour, applauding each favorite performer with the noisy carelessness of a child, or hissing another with such good will that all eyes were drawn toward the box, not a little to the red-haired giant's disgust.

"You'll play the devil with the hull thing, Eph, if you don't mind," he muttered, savagely. "We ain't at no baby-play now. Let 'em git a scent o' what we're after, an' all blazes couldn't save us."

"We two kin run the hull outfit, ef they tries to cut up rusty," scornfully retorted Little Pepper. "The cowardly gang'd run from any one on us—let alone two."

Red Pepper soon saw that words were worse than useless. In fact, Little Pepper was nearly wild, and had to let off some of his superfluous steam "or bust." The killing strain—the absolute torture he had undergone, thanks to the doctor, in believing that Big George lay at death's door, only to be preserved by his own unaided exertions—now relieved by the assurance that his idolized brother would in all probability be upon his feet in a day or two—rendered him doubly excitable, and all that Red Pepper could do or say would not keep him within bounds.

Eagerly and impatiently Red Pepper consulted the programme, and awaited for the first appearance of *La belle Estelle*, and he drew a long sigh of positive relief as the lithe, graceful figure moved toward the footlights, dressed as a Highland lassie. Until then he feared she might fail to appear from some cause. This doubt settled, he prepared for business.

Summoning a waiter lad, he confided to his care the note which had caused Big George so much trouble in composing, and bade him deliver it at once, and to return with an answer. In due time the boy returned, bringing with him the ordered drinks, and in answer to Red Pepper, said that the lady read the note, remarking that it would be all right. He received the promised reward, and hastily left the box, pausing upon the stairs to wipe his flushed face, with a chuckle of relief at his fortunate escape.

"Ef he only knowed I'd lost the paper—taint gold he'd paid me with—not much! But I don't answer no more calls from that box this night!"

It was true he had lost the note in the jam below, and after a vain search for it, had resolved to lie his way out of the scrape as the most satisfactory method. To his carelessness, Estelle probably owed her escape, since Big George had cunningly chosen the only subject by which she would have been lured into the toils, thanks to his past intimacy with her affairs. Hence she knew nothing of the plot, when, some minutes later, she learned all from Little Cassino.

Expecting her appearance with every moment, Red Pepper sat on nettles. Not so the dwarf. The devil put a diabolical fancy into his head. And as he glanced at the motionless trapeze, suspended only a few feet from and directly in front of the box, he rubbed his hands and chuckled like a veritable imp of Satan.

"Ef I could only reach them ropes—jest fer a minnit—wouldn't it be fun? Jost tetch my knife to it—jest enough so whin he clumb up thar an' get to cuttin' up his monkey-shins, the rope would break an' send him down thar in a hurry to break his ornery neck—an' mebbe bust up hafe a dozen o' them pilgrims—oh, Lord! what fun!"

"Drop it!" grated Red Pepper. "Thar's somebody a-comin'!"

But once more it turned out a false alarm. By this time the giant was growing uneasy. The end of the variety performance was drawing near, and still no signs of their intended victims. Growing desperate, he bade Little Pepper await his return, and passing downstairs he pushed his way into the bar-room.

And the blaze of trumpets, George Mack bounded upon the stage and bowed to the enthusiastic audience, then passed on to where the rope hung by means of which he gained the trapeze. Little Pepper watched his graceful and daring movements with the eye of a basilisk, and all the time the devil within him kept whispering *do it—do it!* Almost unconsciously he drew his broad bowie knife, facing its edge, his eyes never leaving the figure of the young gymnast. And then—he knew that the moment was at hand when he must act.

As everybody knows who has witnessed a trapeze act, one of the most common exploits is for the performer to seemingly fall head first, catching upon the ropes with his feet.

George Mack balanced himself upon the small of his back, with folded arms, then fell backward, with a loud cry. At the same instant the dwarf flung his weapon. His aim was true. Half-severed, the rope snapped, and the unfortunate gymnast was hurled headlong upon the benches, twenty feet below.

A scene of frightful confusion followed. (To be continued—commenced in No. 345.)

"TRICKS OF THE TRADE."

BY HENRI MONTCAIM.

Did you ever hearn tell how Parson Sherman Got red o' preachin' his Sunday sermon Three times runnin'? Ye never? Wal, now, Ef ye've no objections, I'll tell ye how.

Wal, the first time, ye see, he read off the text; Then, while we wuz waitin' fur what come next, He asked, in his blent old Methodist way, "Does any one know what I'm goin' to say?"

We all shook our heads with a vacant look, An' the parson he slammed to the good old Book; An' sez he, "Then there's no use preachin' to sich ignoramuses as you!"

We never thort he'd try that more'n one day; But when he do ye think, sir, the very next Sunday, He inquired agin: "Do ye know to-day What it is I'm goin' to say?"

We didn't mean to be took in so, So some of us answered, "Yes, we know." But he grinned, an' sez he, "Ef ye know so well, ye will see it's no use fur me to tell ye!"

Wal, the third time he asked us we wuz ready, An' Deacon Simmons got up, an' said he: "P'raps, parson, you'd better preach it through. Some of us don't know an' some of us do."

Then the parson, he looked round kind o' grim; An' sez he (twarnt to no use tryin' ter fool him): "Ef the hull church here don't guess I wot it, Let them that do know tell them that don't."

The Phantom Spy; OR, THE PILOT OF THE PRAIRIE.

BY BUFFALO BILL,

(HON. WM. F. COODY.)

AUTHOR OF "DEADLY EYE," "THE PRAIRIE ROVER," "KANSAS KING," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN OUTLAW'S LETTER.

THE HERSMAN, who had not deemed it his duty to join in the fight against his pursuers, rode out to the fort and begged to see Colonel Radcliff.

He was sent to the quarters of the commandant, who beheld in him the same man who had before brought him a message from the old Hermit Chief, and his face turned a shade paler as he held forth his hand for the letter the messenger drew from his pocket.

As he was turning to enter his room, the son of Erin spoke up, briskly:

"Ye honor's pardon, but I've had a sharp race and a big scare for my skulp, an' a wee bit of whisky would be after preventing the courage of Ould Ireland from oozing clane out of me boots, yer honor's honor."

"Orderly, give the man a dram and some food," said the colonel, and he ascended to the house-top on which was a look-out, from which he had a fine view of the prairie and the preparations for battle.

Glancing keenly at the combatants, he then broke the seal of his letter and read:

OUTLAW STRONGHOLD, September 15th, —

"I write to inform you that the Prairie Pilot is not dead."

"True, I had him hung; but you remember we were attacked—I believed then by your troops, so I gave orders for a hasty retreat."

"Finding we were not pursued, I returned to the spot we had fled from, to find that the scout had been cut down."

"All was silent around there, and no trace of who had been the attacking party."

"Still I believed the scout to be dead, and when, shortly before midnight, Ralph arrived, thanks to your kindness, we at once departed for the stronghold."

"Arriving here, a grief fell upon me, for I was missing, having left, so my lieutenant told me, to follow our trail, and endeavor to rescue her brother."

"I have sent spies and scouts everywhere on the border, but no tidings of her can be gained, and I fear she has been killed and scalped by the redskins."

"If it was certain of it, I would leave the border, for upon her coming of age, or death, you know, hangs a fortune."

"As this Indian war has stopped emigration westward, you know I have to raid on the settlements, for we must make a living; but you will admit that I have let you and your district severely alone—nay, we have not struck back again when your men, under that dashing young Ashland, have hit us hard."

"If for Ralph, he is no longer the gallant chief he was, and will not lead the men upon raids; indeed, he even opposes raiding; so I've taken, to the saddle again, believe the girls married so slyly, and your kindness in saving his neck, have made a fool of him—as if it were not right to divide the riches of this world equally!"

"Now, to another cross which I have to bear, added to the cessation of Western emigration, the loss of lone, and help of Ralph: there is a deadly foe upon the trail of my band, *hunting us to death.*"

"Night after night we feel his deadly stroke, and rapidly our ranks are thinned by this monster."

"More yet, it is none other than the Prairie Pilot—man I hoped and believed was in his grave."

"The fellow is too quick for us, try as we can to get him; and now I have set the whole band to returning the compliment and hunting him."

"But it does no good—they hunt him, and he *fin* is them."

"More than a score of times he could have killed me; but he refrains from so doing, keeping me, I suppose, for a kind of dessert, after he has made soup-meat of the whole band; a *reluctant* thought, very."

"Now I wish to propose to you to draw your dogs of war off my trail, and I will pledge myself to catch and hang the Prairie Pilot, ere autumn tinges the forests."

"I propose this, as his haunts are in your vicinity, and, friendly as I am with the Indians, I can soon run the Pilot around, if no little misunderstanding occurs between your men and mine."

"What say you?"

"Return answer by bearer."

"Yours in affection, as men call me, THE HERMIT CHIEF."

When he had finished reading the above letter, Colonel Radcliff wrote on it with a lead-pencil, simply:

"I am glad to feel that the Prairie Pilot is not dead. From the first I treated him unjustly, and it is my intention to recall the brand of exile against him. His gallant services against the Indians and outlaws shall win him a pardon for shooting down the two troopers, for I am more to blame in that matter than was the scout."

"With you I wish no quarrel, and it is not becoming in me to advise you; but against all other outlaws on this border I intend to wage a relentless war."

Calling his orderly, he sealed the envelope, and bade him give it to the messenger, and tell him to return with it as soon as his horse was sufficiently rested to travel.

Then Colonel Radcliff called Ruth, and together they watched the battle out upon the prairie.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECRET RETREAT.

THOUGH there was considerable stir in the fort and settlement, over the battle that had just been fought, there was a calm resting upon the scene of combat, as the outlaw courier rode slowly from the stockade, and started upon his return to the stronghold in the hills.

As he rode along, many eyes were watching him from the fort and settlement, and were surprised to see him suddenly put spurs to his horse and dash away at full speed.

The cause of this sudden move on the part of the outlaw was soon evident, when over a distant roll of the prairie a horseman dashed into view.

"The Prairie Pilot! The Prairie Pilot!" yelled a dozen voices, and also recognizing that his name was the outlaw courier, Colonel Radcliff, from his house-top, where he still sat, enjoying the balmy afternoon air, called out:

"After him, Bob! After him, and tell him to spare that messenger."

Bravo Bob sprang into his saddle, and, calling to Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave to follow, he dashed out upon the prairie.

In the mean time Prairie Pilot, having urged Racer into a sweeping gallop, was rapidly overhauling the outlaw, swift as was his long, wiry steed.

Presently the outlaw turned in his saddle and opened fire with his rifle upon his pursuer.

Instantly Racer came to a sudden halt, up went the glittering rifle of Prairie Pilot—a puff of smoke, and ere the report reached the ears of the lookers-on, the outlaw reeled and fell from his saddle.

A moment after Prairie Pilot dismounted and stood beside the man he had slain.

A short while he remained there, and then springing into his saddle once more rode slowly toward Bravo Bob and the two guides who were approaching.

"Hello, old fellow, you have finished one of the colonel's couriers," cried Bravo Bob, as he rode up.

"I have killed an outlaw, Bob, and made a discovery; now I will not tell you what it is, but I desire you, Sam and Dave to come to the retreat to-night, and come prepared for work."

"Also, say to Colonel Radcliff that I will myself return him the dispatches I have captured, and that he need have no fear."

"Remember, I shall expect you to-night."

So saying, Prairie Pilot waved his hand to Yankee and Scalp-lock, who just then rode up, and dashed away across the prairie, while Bravo Bob and his comrades returned to the fort, the former making his report to Colonel Radcliff, who seemed considerably disturbed thereby.

Shortly after nightfall Bravo Bob, Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave rode from the stockade, going upon a scout, they said.

A gallop of an hour brought them to the foothills, and, as if thoroughly acquainted with the way to the secret retreat of Prairie Pilot, Bravo Bob rode rapidly on until he came to a small stream running through a deep gorge.

Into the scout's urged their horses for a quarter of a mile, when it emptied into a larger stream, which ran swiftly through high and precipitous banks.

Though the water of this stream came up to the saddle-girths, Bravo Bob rode boldly in, and going with the current, continued on until the creek was overhung, on each side, by lofty bluffs, and roared through its narrow banks, forming shallow, but foaming rapids.

But the horses held their footing, although Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave several times thought they were gone.

After ten minutes' hard battling with the stream, Bravo Bob disappeared in what seemed the very wall of rock; but his comrades soon beheld a narrow and small chasm, into which they quickly followed their leader.

To their surprise they found themselves in a small, but fertile valley, with high hills overhanging it upon all sides, and a growth of trees sheltering it.

Beneath the hoofs of their horses was a carpet of velvet grass, and near the opening toward the river bubbled up a spring of clear water.

"Wall, this is a off-shoot o' Paradise, I guess, from this way it looks ter-night," said Yankee Sam.

"You bet; ther must be angels round heur," put in Scalp-lock Dave, and Bravo Bob felt that he had hit the truth pretty well, for he knew of one not far away, who was an angel in his eyes.

"Comrades, I am glad you are pleased with my home; you are welcome."

At the stern, deep voice breaking upon their ears, all started; but the next moment Prairie Pilot stepped out from the shadow of a tree and greeted them.

"Come with me to my cabin, and in the mean time give your steeds a feast," continued Prairie Pilot, and the horses were at once turned loose to graze, while all four men walked up through the timber toward a small cabin, through the open door of which streamed a bright light.

The cabin was built of rough logs, had two rooms, a spacious fire-place in one, which seemed to be used as the sleeping apartment of the

scout, and the kitchen and dining-room combined, for there were culinary utensils around, a table was set out with a tempting supper of coffee, bread, buffalo-steaks and fish thereon, while in one corner of the room was a rude bed, above which hung a rifle, several revolvers and a knife.

Before the fire, watching the broiling of a steak, was Ione, once known as the Phantom Spy, and though she bowed pleasantly to Yankee Sam and Scalp-lock Dave, she held forth her hand to Bravo Bob, while a blush stole over her beautiful face.

"Now, comrades, we will have some supper, and then I will tell you my plan for playing a bold game, but one which I think will be successful, for you know that I have cause to hate the outlaws, and I am determined to hunt them to the bitter end."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A BOLD VENTURE.

THE second day after the three scouts sought the secret retreat of Prairie Pilot, the old Hermit Chief was pacing nervously up and down the piazza of his cabin home.

Suddenly he discovered Antonio approaching on foot, while by his side was a horseman, mounted upon a wiry-looking steed.

The appearance of the horseman, as he rode up attracted the attention of the Hermit Chief, for he was a superb-looking specimen of manhood, well formed, and with a dark, handsome face.

His mustache was dark and exceedingly long, his hair hung far down upon his shoulders, while his eyes were black and piercing.

He was dressed in buckskin, and was well armed.

"Who have you there, Antonio?"

"A courier to see you, Chief."

"Ha! Come up here, my man. From whence do you come?"

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Sunshine Papers.

"These Are The Times."

He makes his toilet elaborately. He has stopped at the barber's on his way home; but now he applies a suspicion of powder to his freshly-shaved skin, peers anxiously into the mirror to be positive that there is not a hair more on one side of the part of his mustache than upon the other, combs, and brushes, and caresses his side-whiskers, and throws back his head, to view them, until he is solemnly convinced that they are arranged to the greatest advantage, decides, with algebrical correctness, at what angle he shall part his hair, and bathes face and hands with Extract of White Rose. He tries several neckties, and puts womankind to shame by making his selection and artistically "fixing" it within thirty-four minutes. He puts on his shirt, and buttons his vest, with an air of complete self-satisfaction; adjusts his watch-chain and finger-ring, perfumes his handkerchief, slips some cash or coffee-beans into his pocket, and crowds himself into his coat. Having struck several attitudes before the dressing-glass, and assured himself that from his polished toes to his shining beaver he is "without guile," he marches away, with the bearing of a "conquering hero," to call upon a young lady. A very benevolent act on his part, since he has informed his gentlemen friends that he only visits the girl because she is so spoony on him, "and all that sort of thing, you know." He is ushered into the lady's parlor and finds his counterpart, in the person of another faultlessly gotten-up specimen of masculinity, there before him. He is all grace toward her and all supreme unconsciousness toward him, though he is inwardly resenting her friendliness with number one, and resolving to "sit him out." At length the lady intimates that it is time for visitors to depart. He looks suggestively at the intrusive caller, at the same time he makes a move to go. The lady gracefully takes him at his word, and when he fully comprehends the situation he is dismissed, and on his way home, enjoying the consciousness that his admirable rival remains undisputed possessor of the field.

He is a book-keeper, and a bachelor of regular habits and nervous temperament. But for three successive nights he has dissipated in the way of unusual hours, and upon the fourth re-

tires with a horrible headache, and the aggravating consciousness that the narrow will be the first of the month, and that though he has spent several hours of over-time upon his trial-balance it has not proved. No sooner is he comfortably in bed than he finds himself trying to discover the errors in that balance-sheet; and, again and again, he investigates with torturing minuteness, every item that may have been entered incorrectly upon day-book or ledger. He tosses, and groans, and vows, vainly, that he will not think of business; for no sooner does he firmly make such a resolve than some new account occurs to him, plunging him into fresh depths of arithmetical despair. He tries all the reputed orthodox methods of courting sleep—counts a thousand; repeats the multiplication table backward; and says over the Roman figures up to five hundred. Still he is wide-awake, with mind constantly wandering to the pages of his office books. He gets out of bed, lights a cigar, and takes a bath—inwardly, and inured with something spirituous. Finally he retires once more, and proceeds to ransack his memory for proverbs and texts to repeat. This unusual spiritual application, or the usual spiritual application he has just taken, finally induces a delicious drowsiness that deepens into recuperative slumber. Five, ten, twelve minutes of blissful unconsciousness. Then he awakens to hear ten cats making music in the yard.

John, has the afternoon mail come! Ay! Let me see what there is of importance. Ah! Morris will be here precisely at half-past nine to-morrow morning to see about the purchase of my house at Hazel Grove. What a relief it will be to me, to get rid of that property! It has been a continual drain upon me. I'll have the papers all ready, and I must be here promptly, in the morning; for he writes that he leaves town on the noon-train.

The next morning, while his wife is dressing, the gentleman asks if breakfast is not rather behindhand. He is informed that the cook left the day before, and the waitress has the meal to get, which may account for the delay; but wife will go down and hurry matters. After half-hour of nervous waiting, he descends to the kitchen and finds wife reading the advertising lists of the morning paper, while she waits for the kettle to boil; the waitress is sick in bed. He says he must go. Wife pouts, and says he need not be so impatient, when she is doing her best to make the coffee; and then coaxes him to wait and have "just one cup," to see how nicely she can make it; and adds, pathetically, that she has trials enough to bear without his making her feel badly. So he stays for one scalding cup of muddy coffee. He is over a half-hour later than usual when he swings upon a car. In a few minutes the car stops. The horses are hauled. On they go, then stop again. This keeps up until they are half the way downtown, when they come to a full stop. A stone-truck has broken down upon the track. He gets out and walks the remainder of the distance. He arrives at the office tired, hungry, hot, to find that Morris has just left, and will not be in town again for six months. "These are the times that try men's souls," A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

THE GUIDE-BOARD.

NO. III.

I've known the road to poverty!
Turn in at any tavern sign.
Turn in—it's tempting as can be;
There's bran-new cards and liquor fine.
—OLD SONG.

I HAVE given you the text as I have found it, but I ought to modify it somewhat, as there are a great number of taverns that are kept on good, honest principles, and where one can find rest and enjoyment without having the disagreeables to counteract the same.

But, in some taverns, how much precious time is wasted in discussing matters that are of no earthly good or profit! how many men, who might be more usefully employed, are hanging around the bar-room of these taverns when they might be doing some good and conferring more benefit upon themselves and upon mankind! It has always seemed to me that when men are so fond of toasting their toes at the tavern fire, their homes cannot be any too pleasant, or they wouldn't be so eager to leave them. To remedy the matter, the first thing to do is to make these homes pleasant, and then there wouldn't be so much pleasure sought for abroad.

Don't tell me that the wives are to blame and have sour looks, so that one is glad to seek happiness in some other quarter. Tut, tut, for shame! If you masculine bipeds were more pleasant in your demeanor, you would not find your wives so cross. Fact is, you are too eager to go to the tavern, and there pass the hours which, by good rights, belong to your better halves.

This tavern lounging has been the ruin of too many of our young men for us not to utter our protest against it. And we do protest against it, because the evil grows, and when it becomes too late, then we say—why didn't we see that the guide-board showed us where the danger lay?

Tavern lounging is idleness, and idleness leads to poverty. The listless hand and sluggish brain will see the fortune slip through their hands like so much sand.

The need of the hour is work. I grant you there is need of relaxation and a need of amusement, but cannot these needs be better made use of than in spending one's time in low company, drinking until the speech God has gifted one with should be the incoherent sentences of some poor demented being? Does this drinking to excess show man's true nobility?

When there are so many ways of passing one's leisure time in an innocent manner, the great wonder is why so many choose those which are the most hurtful. A quiet game of cards at home, or among good friends, I could never see the harm in; but gambling is different from this.

When work is to be done, I should think it wrong to use the time in playing cards just as I should in playing dominoes—dominoes are considered moral, while cards are tabooed. You may say that cards are disreputable because folks can gamble with them. It seems to me folks could gamble with dominoes if they desired to do so. Would you refuse to take stock in any paying company simply because people gamble in stocks? There is not so much harm in the use of some things as in the abuse of them. But we will let that go, and you are welcome to your own opinion on the subject so long as you let me have my say. Could any one ask for more?

Gifted men have wrecked their lives by indulging in too much tavern-lounging; they have besotted their brains and drowned their ambitions, talents and health in too much dissipation. What ruins and wrecks are all about us, and of those who promised to be of usefulness in a high sphere of life! Their true nobility sunk until the world looks on and pities

them, thinking what they might have been and what they now are. Mounted on the ladder of fame, and almost on its topmost round when the temptation came, which could not be resisted, and the ladder crumbled away and leaves poverty, mingled with shame!

No wonder we pity them, for it is a sad sight, and yet how many have been traveling that road to poverty—through their own fault—and how many thousands heed not the warning, but are now going in the same path! They see the danger, but they heed it not! They think they will stop at a certain point, but they will not, and do not, unless that point be destruction.

If I have turned on from the road to poverty, happy should I think myself. I have endeavored to sink my flippant nature for once, as the subject is not to be thought lightly of.

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Hints to a Railroad Conductor.

GET the situation.
Look as if you didn't care much for riding on the cars.

Yell out, "all aboard," when you mean "all a-rail."

Return to the company just as much of the fare as your honesty will allow.

Always wake up the right passenger in the wrong place, or the wrong passenger in the right place, just as is most handy.

Bounce through the car, taking off hats, and elbowing heads.

Always sit down beside the best-looking young lady to make out your report.

Learn to answer a dozen questions at once, with the answers reversed.

Never wake up a young couple who have gone to sleep on each other's shoulders, even if you have to pass their station.

Assist the pretty girls off with as many smiles as if you were not married. Let the ugly ones get off themselves.

A gentleman persists in smoking in the ladies' car, put the cigar out, or put the man out, or the ladies will feel mighty put out.

It will be well for you to take your meals off a time-table.

Always be sure you are on the right track in everything.

Always shove the check in a passenger's hat hard enough to push his hat down over his eyes. If he should turn to object, check him on the spot.

Practice slamming the door until you get proficient enough at it to loosen the end of the car, or make the passengers think there has been a collision.

Allow no familiarities, such as asking unnecessary questions of how soon you reach such a station, or how fast you are running; and if any one asks how far it is to such a place, tell him, "Almost as far as it used to be."

Never let anybody who is in a dreadful hurry get out and walk ahead; it endangers the cowcatcher.

Always keep to the right, as the law directs.

Never make a passenger pay twice unless you can help it.

Allow no ladies on board with trains longer than the train itself.

If the weather is cold, see that all the windows are up, and the door open. If the fires are out and passengers complain of it, tell them you don't see how it got out, as the doors were locked.

Always wear a sober, austere look, whether you are sober or not, just as if you were allowing people to ride on your train for pure accommodation, and that you don't care whether they ride or not.

Always try to land as many passengers at their destination, alive, as you can conveniently.

Never try to run your train over the top of an approaching freight train; you might not strike the track as you come down on the other side.

If you see a man chasing your train when you are leaving the depot, whip up; he might be trying to capture it.

Never slack up to let a passenger off, even though he gives you some of his slack.

Always try to reach the junction a little after time, so your name will be on a good many lips.

By your conduct a conductor is to be judged. In case of accident, always be the first one to jump off the train to oversee it.

If you have any children never go back on the switch.

See that your train is well manned with newboys of the most unquenchable type, for they serve to relieve the monotony of railroad travel.

Always allow ten minutes for the passengers to go in and look at the dinner-tables, and smell the victuals; it is a great relief.

Be sure to start out just as somebody is getting on; it always makes a little amusement for people about.

Allow no one to stand on the platform; tell them that during these election times it is your platform, and it is dangerous.

Never allow a train to overtake and pass you on the same track.

See that the drinking-water on board is warm and the passengers cold.

If a man tries to dead-beat his way on your train, see to it that he is beat dead.

If your train is thrown from the track it will be a *threw* train, in one sense of the word.

Be temperate; brandy smashes produce railroad smashes, which are bad on accident insurance companies.

If a woman is only half fair, you should in no case charge her full fare. That wouldn't be fair; it wouldn't be half-air.

Be sure that your reputation doesn't go down-grade too fast.

If the weather is hot, see that all the windows are out of fix and won't raise, so they will let the heat in.

When you ask a man for his ticket don't allow him to tell you to tick it.

Make your brakemen yell out the stations as loud as they can; the probability is, they will very soon get so hoarse they can't yell any more—which would be a relief.

Be sure you follow these rules; let everybody know you are running that train yourself, be affable to the directors and laughable to the ladies; divide generously with the company, and in a few years you will be able to pay the tax on a brown-stone front, with a brick stable in the rear; and you can acknowledge this advice by giving me a free pass, and I will ride with you.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

CRITICS force growth, and make men talkative and entertaining, but they also make them artificial.

Topics of the Time.

—There are people who still think that Sir John Franklin may be alive in the Northern seas. One such person thus puts the case: "In Melville Bay, in 1845, Franklin told Capt. Martin, of a whale-ship, that he had provisions for seven years, but could make them last longer—that they were killing and salting up birds every day. Then, if the expedition did reach a warm climate about the Pole, and they could find land, and it fertile, as it probably would be, a part of the crew must be still alive, and more flourishing than was Alexander Selkirk. If there is an aboriginal race of people, and mixing with them these English people may not be altogether unhappy, having partially forgotten their homes."

—A young man read a few days ago that if you wanted to find out if the woman you had selected for your future spouse has a good temper, you ought to take occasion to step on her dress, or snap the sticks of her fan, or in some other way annoy or discompose her. "If," says the great authority who presided over the column of advice, "if she betrays no signs of ill temper she will prove a model wife." Accordingly the young man seized an opportunity when his sweetheart was rigged in her most killing array to step on her trail and pulled out about three yards of gathers, with a rip like a peal of thunder, exposing about three-quarters of the frame-work that makes her dress stick out behind. But instead of meeting the accident with perfect equanimity, she turned round and jabbed her parasol into his eye, called him a lunkhead, and asked him why he didn't wear his feet sideways. He expressed himself as thankful that he didn't marry the girl before finding out what sort of a temper she had. We give this as an answer to some of our correspondents who want to know how most to please the ladies. By knowing what *not* to do is the way to begin.

—The statement is made by the president of a life insurance company that it is a fact that women live longer in this country than in any other. They are less robust and muscular than the women of other nations, but their tenacity of life is strong, and their constitutions are sufficiently enduring to keep them alive considerably longer than their appearances, as a general thing, would warrant. Which is bad news, we infer, for those who have their wife's maiden aunts for advisers and an independent mother-in-law for a standing committee of one over the domestic peace.

—One of the curiosities of the Emperor of Russia's palace at Tsarskoe Selo is the Horse Asylum, where the imperial chargers live in snug quarters when they are no longer fit for use. Near the comfortable stables is the cemetery, where the history of many a famous steed may be read in the inscriptions on the tombstones. The rooms which present the greatest historical interest are those which were occupied by the Emperor Alexander I., and which are shown exactly as he left them; and the chamber which is considered as the greatest curiosity is the room in which all the walls are of amber. Beyond the garden, in front of that part of the palace occupied by the Emperor, is a little island in which there is a Russian cottage, a garden, a cow-house—in short, a complete establishment, on a diminutive scale, arranged for the amusement of the Duchess of Edinburgh when she was a child.

—A striking illustration of how rapidly the Palisades are undergoing change, may be gathered from the fact that a patent medicine dealer, four years ago, painted letters on the face of the rock nearly opposite Spuyten Duyvel. The shameful disfigurement has been almost entirely removed by the constant falling of the rocks which is taking place. It is to be regretted that the rocks do not fall more often, for the man who goes around painting signs on fences and rocks is a nuisance who ought to be abated by a general law.

—Wolves in Russia are even yet quite "an institution." We have a Russian writer's authority for saying that these ravenous beasts in 1873 did nearly as much damage as a Tartar invasion might have inflicted. They carried off 179,000 cattle and 562,000 smaller domestic animals from the 45 governments of Russia in Europe. In the Baltic provinces fell 1,000 head of horned cattle, and in the Polish provinces 2,700 oxen and 8,800 sheep, pigs and goats. The *Journal des Debats* calculates that if a cow be reckoned as worth 30 roubles, and a sheep at 4 roubles, the gross sum of the tribute levied by the wolves in Russia must reach 7,700,000 roubles. This is an amount of money quite well worth looking after, and it represents a number of wolves which must be dangerous even to human life.

—Of the women of Turkey we are told that living on cereals, fruit and light diet they show it in a livid complexion, which is evidently the mode. "Some ladies in our party charged powder and paint upon them, but I did not see it. Their eyes are usually brown; their hair hid beneath their graceful head-gear. I saw positively no very plain ones," says a recent writer; "but there seemed to be an extraordinary resemblance among them, which, perhaps, was only due to the fact that the points in which they differed from Europeans and agreed together were to a stranger's eyes more emphatic than the private marks by which face differed from face. I saw no grace in their manner, and nothing like elegance of figure. Indeed, a figure is out of question in such bundles of drapery. There was also a great listlessness and vacancy in their faces. They are said to be shockingly ignorant, helpless and stupid."

—And of the Serbian women, whose country is now the seat of force and relentless war, a writer for a London paper says: "They wore on their heads red kerchiefs, with the ends hanging down their backs and bound on their heads by a velvet fillet embroidered with coins, in which were often stuck flowers, chiefly of red and white. They were generally dressed in white, but invariably with the brilliant apron sewed down to the skirt, and often with a gaudily-embroidered stomacher, or perhaps breastplate would be the more descriptive term, studded with coins on black velvet. The working dress of the women in the fields is a short jacket, braided and slashed in the fashion and of the cut of that worn by the men, and a red and yellow kerchief crossed over the bosom, a petticoat striped mostly in the parallel stripes of Moorish pattern, but occasionally in checkers, which make the pattern a tartan, a tapestry-like apron of brighter colors than the petticoat, and bare legs and feet." The men of Serbia, who are now doing the fighting, are, according to the same authority, "a fine race, tall, with a certain staleness and self-respect in every gesture; their faces are almost always good, and often quite intellectual and chivalrous, but muscular development the peasant women of Serbia can give their husbands a stone and a beating."

—This isn't a bad shot for the Memorial Hall portion of the Centennial Exposition. Says a correspondent of a Chicago paper: "I saw a youngish negro man, who was very black, and very stalwart, and he spoke in a low, mellow voice. He had a rugged, uncouth, but kindly face, and he was tenderly and carefully leading about an old blind woman whom he called mother. He stopped before anything that interested him, and explained it to her in a very curious and graphic manner. His attention was arrested by a beautiful Cupid and Psyche. 'Dis is a white mammy and her baby, and they has just got no clo' onto 'em at all to speak of, and he is a kiasin' of her like mischief, to be shuah. I's kind o' glad you can't see 'em, 'cause you'd be flustered like 'cause they don't stay in the house till they dress themselves. All these figures seem to be scarce of clo', but they is mighty pooly, only they be too white to be any 'lation to you and me, mammy. They be one nigger among 'em which is crying over a handkerchief. They call him Othello. Mebbe his mother is dead and he can't fetch her to the show, poor fellow. Everybody ain't as comfortable as we be, mammy, be they?'"

Readers and Contributors.

Accepted: "A Vision;" "We Never Can be Friends Again;" "Might Not Right;" "A Lost Lady;" "She Knew Me Not;" "A Gay Mourner;" "Morning on the Sea;" "The Lesson of the Days;" "Walking in the Leaves."

Declined: "Lightfoot the Scout, etc.;" "The Wooden Web;" "The Dying Schoolboy;" "Speaking Ill to Do Good;" "Delayation;" "My Major Part;" "Sealing a Not Knowing;" "Race With a Rogue;" "The Call;" "A Soldier's Deed;" "Carrie's Luck."

To Authors! No more poems on "Autumn," if you please!
C. C. E. Let the vice alone, for smoking is such where it injures.

ADDISON SMITHY. You are under legal control until you are twenty-one.
A. S. Send your poem to some one of the boys' papers!

Mrs. ADDIE D. Have written. Will examine the MS. if submitted.
E. B. A. We know nothing about the "gum." Better avoid any experiments and use gold foil for the teeth.

WILLIE WILLING. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," is good advice. So is "Faint heart never won fair lady."

KATE AND CO. Give the friend the right of a friend if you expect his sympathy and help. It is proper to do as "Lady Lou" suggests.

H. Q. S. E. Cambridge, writes: "Will you please inform me what is the meaning of the words 'La Nouvelle'?" "The newest thing," or "The Novelty."

ZIP. Offer the lady either arm, according to circumstances—the left usually, because she is then outside of the passing throng and thus more conspicuous. "Dime Book of Etiquette" is one of the best on this theme.

PAUL WEBB. There is no guide-book to printing. You must learn in a printing-office by a regular apprenticeship. Try for a place in some reputable office and serve three years, not less, if you would make a good printer.

MISSIONARY. The Sioux never have been and we fear never will be "civilized." They are incorrigible savages. The Delaware, the Shawnee, the Wyandots, Crows, and other tribes, have become peaceful under pressure—not from taste or desire. The Sioux are a fanatical race, and will only be tamed under pressure. This is our view.

MOLLIE ERWIN. Two real authors is just one too many. Neither will hold. Drop one and favor the other all you can. The best advice is to have two strings to the bow, but one good string is better than two that are liable to break at any moment.—Take your printer-boy before any others, we should say.

CVOTTE. The profession of the stage is a trying one for a poor girl to attempt. But, if you are possessed of the ambition of your mother, and believe that earnest devotion to study and practice will succeed, we can not discourage such an ambition. Your course is to attempt amateur theatricals as far as possible. They are a good school. Read, read, so, as much dramatic poetry, and a little of the great dramas and characters—the History of the Drama, etc., etc.—all of which are essential to a knowledge as to what is "dramatic art." When you find an opportunity to enter upon the boards of a perfectly reputable theater, in a perfectly reputable play, try some subordinate part. If you can do well, your manager will see the talent that is in you and help you forward. It is the triflers who fail, and the honest, earnest students, and those ambitious of high excellence, who succeed. If you can procure Mrs. Anne Cora Mowatt's autobiography, read it. If you are young don't venture from home, unless under the most considerate and watchful of guardians.

C. McW. Warren, N. Y., says: "When being introduced to a lady should a gentleman raise his hat or just bow? How should a gentleman help a lady upon a horse? On which side of her should he ride? How should he assist her into a carriage or sleigh? How should a gentleman ask a lady to ride with him? A gentleman should always raise his hat when introduced to a lady, bowing to her, and then stop. A lady upon a horse, take her left hand, as she will need her right to support her skirts, and place your hand for her to rest her foot upon until she is seated in the saddle, when adjust the stirrup for her and dispose of her skirt.—Ride upon her right hand that you may not interfere with the reins, and I am to never to ride in advance of her, but a trifle to the rear; though near enough to converse with her conveniently.—When assisting a lady into a sleigh or carriage, take the lady's foot, and place it in the saddle, and have the pleasure of riding with you, Thursday next? I will call for you at four p. m."

JENNIE BAYLIS writes: "Will you explain for me what is meant by making one's toilet before retiring? I thought 'making the toilet' referred to bathing, arranging the hair, and dressing." It is quite true that bathing, arranging the hair, etc., constitute the making of one's toilet. I am to refined young ladies make their toilet as carefully before retiring as when rising. Every night a young lady should bathe her face and hands, and if it is not desirable to take a complete bath, brush the nails, cleanse the teeth thoroughly with water and a thread of silk, and smoothly brush her hair. It is as imperative to her health and neatness.—That you do these things at night as that you do them in the morning.

JENNIE E. CHURCH writes: "I have just had money given me to purchase a silk dress to wear to an evening wedding party, and I am to make my choice entirely by myself. Will you suggest what I had better get, and how have I made? I am seventeen years of age, and I am to wear a refined young ladies make their toilet as carefully before retiring as when rising. Every night a young lady should bathe her face and hands, and if it is not desirable to take a complete bath, brush the nails, cleanse the teeth thoroughly with water and a thread of silk, and smoothly brush her hair. It is as imperative to her health and neatness.—That you do these things at night as that you do them in the morning.

NEED J. O. says: "Will you tell me what is decolomane, and if a boy can do it? I am fond of fancy-work to do evenings. Do you think it is silly for boys to make up their faces, and wear eye-glasses, and cravats, and such things?" To answer your last question first, Ned: we do not think it silly for boys to spend their evenings doing the things you mention, and over many other employments that help to make a home pretty, and educate the artistic elements in the family circle, and aid you in learning much the same thing. I am to say that there are some boys with such fine tastes. Decolomane is an art by which peculiarly prepared pictures are transferred upon glass, china, and various articles may be elegantly ornamented in this way. You can procure the pictures, implements, and book of instructions from any dealer in fancy stationery or wax-flower materials.

EMMA N. asks: "Who furnishes the wedding cards for a wedding ceremony, the bride or the groom? And who has the right to choose clergyman, ushers, bridesmaids, groomsmen, etc. Please tell me, and you will greatly aid some friends and settle some vexed questions." The bridegroom generally attends to the invitations, though occasionally the bride's parents do so. The bride has the choice of clergyman, and bridesmaids; these latter are selected from among her sisters, the groom's sisters, or her nearest young relatives and friends. The bridegroom chooses his groomsmen, and the ushers are intimate friends of both bride and groom.

Mrs. K. G. E. says: "I am about to marry for the second time, and I am puzzled about my wedding ring. Should I take it off, or may I put the other one on over it? I have never had it off since my wedding day, and I was sincerely attached to my first husband, and was to do just as I please. Is there any rule of etiquette about it? We do not have any rule in the matter, but it is certainly customary to put aside the first wedding ring when a second one replaces it. The very delicacy that prompts your present reticence should lead you to allow you to retain this pledge of a first love, if you wish, should make you desirous of removing from his constant sight what must remind him of that love. The ring given you by your first husband was a link binding you to be true and faithful to him alone, but since the sacred tie is now broken by death, this symbol of your vow to him becomes useless and of no significance. Since you have so far overcome your love and grief as to have entered into a second engagement, it can cost you but little additional pain to remove the ring that you have worn so constantly, but which is now a valueless symbol of a union death has sundered, and a love you have replaced by a second one. By all means put your ring aside when you marry again."

Unanswered questions on hand until appear next week.

LOVE'S LANGUAGE.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

Sweet my love, the night grows old;
Morning's feet are on the hills,
But the love is not yet told
Which my heart forever thrills.

Not yet told! I wonder, dear,
In a thousand nights like this,
Could I make the meaning clear
That is held in one brief kiss.

If I trusted words alone?
Words are empty things and weak,
(Like a rose whose scent has flown)
When the heart of love would speak.

I have many things to tell;
Things so new and yet so old,
But the day-dawn breaks the spell,
And they all must go untold.

But, my love, if kisses hold
Words of meaning in their spell,
Thus love's secrets should be told,
And I pray you heed it well.

I will tell you, ere we part,
In the language of a kiss,
What perhaps your own wise heart
Will interpret not amiss.

From my lips the message take—
Kiss of mouth, and clasp of hand;
Read it well for love's sweet sake.
Ah! I think you understand!

Great Adventurers.

JOHN SMITH,
The Prince of Adventurers.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

In John Smith we certainly have a very remarkable adventurer. His life was simply one succession of adventures—any one of which would have satisfied an ordinary man and inclined him to venture no more; but, with Smith, each danger passed seemed only an incentive to court peril again, so that he became the very impersonation of activity and enterprise. Such a man was the best of all agents to pioneer civilization in the New World, with which his name is now so ineffectually identified.

Smith was born in Willoughby, Lincolnshire, England, A. D. 1579, and was "educated" in a crude way at free schools, from which he broke away at the early age of thirteen, to become a vagabond knight, in quest of change, excitement and renown. His father then dying, and his guardians not caring what he did or whether he went, the hot-headed and resolute lad "made off with himself," by starting for France as page in the traveling suite of an English nobleman. Once in France, for some reason he was discharged, but given money enough to take him home. But home he did not go. He tarried in Paris, and there fell in with habits and people that were not calculated to improve his morals. A benevolent Scotchman, named Hume, finding in the youth something chivalric, gave him good letters and money to carry him to Scotland—there to enter the service of King James; but this money he spent ere he had reached Havre; then, enlisting in the French army, he became a soldier in the ranks (1609). From the French service he drifted to the Netherlands, the arena of terrible contention, and served for four years with the English auxiliary force resisting the encroachments of Philip of Spain. These four years made him well acquainted with the art of war as then understood, and, boy as he was, we appear to have had ambitious designs, for he determined to avail himself of Hume's letters and his own good reputation as a soldier to enter the service of King James. So he started for Scotland, but only to be shipwrecked on the way and narrowly escaping death.

Arrived in Scotland, the letters secured him a good reception, and thereafter he danced attendance upon the court for a whole season, but only to become disgusted with courtier life. Satiated with its folly, he retired to a retreat in the woods, where he devoted himself to reading works on war and noble characters. A few weeks of this hermit life sufficed; and he found his way back to the Netherlands, where he seems to have had service a second time as a soldier in the ranks of the English army.

Now commences a strange passage in his eventful career—his service against the Turks. Why he enlisted in that service he tells us in his own quaint story—"The True Travels, Adventures and Observations of Captain John Smith in Europe, Asia, Africk and America." He says:

"When France and the Netherlands had taught him to ride a horse, and to use his arms, with such rudiments of war as his tender years in those martial schools could attain unto, he was desirous to see more of the world and to try his fortune against the Turks, both lamenting and repenting to have seen so many Christians slaughter one another."

It was a longing, however, only to be fulfilled after many months of vagabond life in France, with singular experiences of both good and bad fortune. In trying to make his way from Marseilles to Italy he was flung overboard by the crowd of pilgrims to Rome, who, regarding him as a Jonah, pitched him into the sea, off St. Mary's Isle, to which he readily swam. The next day he was taken off by a French ship, bound for Alexandria, Egypt. This vessel really was a French cruiser, scurrying around the Mediterranean in quest of prey; so, falling foul of a Venetian argosy richly laden with gold, silks, velvets and other rare goods, with no authority of war whatever, the Frenchman closed in with the merchantman, and a furious fight of an hour and a half was followed by the Venetian's capture and her dissolution. Smith entered so heartily in the fight that his share of the general plunder was five hundred sequins' worth of goods, while he bore away a box of jewels worth as great a sum.

In money once more, he leaves the French pirate, lands in Piedmont, sets out for Leghorn and Rome. Thence he goes to Naples; but with reckless habits, his money was now all gone, and again he vagabondizes until we find him, finally, with the imperial army at Vienna—the beginning of the service against the Turks, with whom Rudolph of Austria was then waging war, with exceeding fury. The Turks had overrun Hungary, and then (1601) possessed some of its finest fortresses. They laid siege to Canisssa, on the border of Styria. The Christian army, trying to relieve the fortress, was defeated with great slaughter, and the Osmanlis took Canisssa, then pushed for Olympach, which Lord Ebersbought, of Rudolph's army, held.

When the Turks came up, Smith was in the Earl of Meldritch's regiment, one of the regiments sent to assail the besiegers and to relieve the fortress. By some means he had learned a code of signals, with different colored lights, and through these he communicated with the commander in the fortress, Lord Ebersbought, to whom he had before imparted the signal language. In this way a simultaneous sally and attack on the Turks was arranged. In what followed, Smith's ingenuity and knowledge of the art of war were success-

ful in preventing one half of the Turkish besieging force from succoring the other half, which, at the signal moment, was assailed by the imperial army with exceeding fury. The Turks were thus routed in detail, and Smith was quite the hero of the camp.

The year succeeding he again rendered singularly valuable service in the siege, by the imperialists, of the Turkish fortress of Alba Regalis. He invented bombs which were thrown by a sling (catapult) into the town, and fired it in many places—a diversion that was followed by most bloody assaults. The Turks fought with a splendid valor, but the great fortress, for sixty years their stronghold, was taken, only to be followed with two awful battles with sixty thousand Turks, sent to the relief of the fortress. In all these proceedings Smith mingled, to his own great honor, and was grievously wounded.

He went with his old commander, Meldritch, to Transylvania—then a wild and almost savage country, where the Turks were in great force, and the mountains were infested with brigand Turks and Tartars, so that the fighting was much like that with the red-men in America. Smith liked this hardy and exciting campaigning of driving the Moslems and brigands up into their strongholds, and then, having got them in their supposed-to-be impregnable fortress at Regall, to slaughter them all there.

The siege of this place was accompanied by an incident equally indicative of the times and the people. The Turks, from their bastions, derided and insulted their Christian assailants, and finally one Turkish warrior challenged any Christian captain to single combat, to the death, before the walls, in sight of both armies—as the Turk expressed it, "to delight the ladies, who did long to see some courtly pastime." So many captains responded to the challenge that they had to draw lots. Smith's name was the first drawn, so he became the champion.

It is not within the limits of this sketch to detail the interesting ceremonies of this knightly fight. The two combatants met in sight of both armies and all the people of the town. At the first run, after the signal was given, Smith planted his lance in the eye-hole of the Turk's steel vizor, and bore him to the ground. Leap from his horse, he lifted the helmet, and finding his antagonist dead, he cut off the head and bore it from the field.

This brought another Turk to challenge the conqueror. One Grualgo, a friend of Turkishness, proposed that his horse and armor should also be added to his head as the prize. Smith accepted joyfully, and on the succeeding day the great assembly again gathered. At the signal the men rushed upon one another. Both lances were shattered in pieces. Each antagonist then drew his pistols and both men were wounded. Smith fired a second shot which shattered the Turk's left arm, when his horse became unmanageable and he was thrown to the earth. Smith dismounted and cut off Grualgo's head, and taking the bloody trophy and the horse, returned to his army.

Smith now became the challenger. The Turks having made no further offers for personal combat, the young Englishman wrote to the ladies of Regall and proposed more diversion for their entertainment, if they could find any one brave enough to try for his head. This banter brought forward one whom Smith called Bonny Mulgro, and once more, on the succeeding day, the tournament was held. Bonny being the challenged party, chose, not the lance, which Smith had used with such murderous efficiency, but pistols, battle-axe and falchion (sword)—in the use of which he was a noted proficient. The signal sounded, and together the champions rushed with leveled pistols. These discharged, with no damage, they drew the battle-axe. Smith gave and received stunning blows until Bonny knocked the ax from his antagonist's hands, and then seemed to have him at his mercy. But the Englishman's horsemanship was superb; he avoided the blows, and, drawing his sword, ran the Turk through the body, and Bonny's head was added to the others.

These wonderful successes against the most eminent Turkish champions caused the Christians great delight, and Smith was honored with a grand public pageant, with rich presents from Prince Moyzes, the leader of the army, and from Meldritch; while Sigismund Bathor, Prince of Transylvania, bestowed additional honors and a yearly pension of three hundred ducats, with a patent of nobility, which entitled the recipient to a coat of arms bearing three Turks' heads in a shield.

We may not dwell on his succeeding exciting and characteristic experiences in this service, further than to say, after Regall's fall, and the massacre of almost all men within it, the imperial army penetrated Wallachia, where several exceeding fierce battles were fought, in one of which the Christians were defeated, and Smith was left for dead on the field. He was discovered by the Turks, and in consequence of his rich armor his life was spared; he was tended with such care that he gradually recovered his strength; but no one coming forward to ransom him, he was offered for sale in the slave mart of Axiopolis. His purchaser was Bashaw Bogall, who, putting him in chains, sent the brave adventurer, unconscious of his identity, to Constantinople. "By twentie and twentie," said Smith, "chained by the necks, they marched in files to this great citie, where they were delivered to their several masters, and he (Smith) to the young Charatza Frogabigazda," the beautiful wife of the Bashaw.

And here comes a real romance of the Orient—an Arabian Night's Tale, in all except that it is a fact. The young mistress soon learned to admire her fine-looking slave, and, both being able to converse in Italian, she found that her lord and master had lied to her when he presented Smith as a young Bohemian nobleman whom he had overcome in battle and captured with his own hand; and, as Desdemona did love Othello for the dangers he had passed, so the lovely Charatza did hear from Smith's own tongue the adventures of his remarkable life, and hearing them, she did forget her station and position by loving the well-minded and well-featured young Englishman.

This fondness for a slave, if discovered by the Bashaw, would have ended with his sacrifice and her own degradation; so her lynx-eyed mother sought to avert such dire disasters by having the slave sold. Oh, father! would you chain me to that miserable epileptic! Why! his mind is already failing—I can see it! He will be an imbecile. Father! father, have mercy!—do not force me to marry a man like that!

Timour was a true Turk. The idea of his sister loving a slave and a Christian was simply revolting, and within one hour of Smith's arrival he was stripped of his own garments, his head and face closely shaved, his body clad in undressed skins and hair-cloth, and a ring of iron "with a long stalk bowed like a sickle"

riveted around his neck. Thus prepared he was given the hardest tasks and the meanest food, and soon was in a state of mind that made him a most dangerous man.

The Bashaw, in riding over his estates, always made it a point to visit Smith for the mere gratification of his spleen. He uniformly ended his orders for new tasks by applying the lash to the slave's shoulders, and denouncing him as a Christian dog. This occurred once too often, for one day when Smith was threshing grain in a shed, alone by himself, to accomplish a given task in beating out a certain quantity of wheat, the Bashaw came to the shed upon his rounds, and, leaving his horse hitched outside, entered the inclosure. The usual indignities were offered, whereupon the slave turned the feat upon the cruel taskmaster and quickly beat him on the brains. Stripping off his own uncouth garments he donned those of the dead Bashaw, and dragging the naked body to a corner covered it from sight with a heap of straw. This done he walked out, mounted the waiting horse and galloped away—he knew not where.

—He would seem, judging from this man's many escapes, as if Providence truly had him in keeping. And he relied, greatly, in all his dangers, upon Providence to aid him. He rode on and on, avoiding any meeting with a human being, and on the third day came to a guide-post which was a cross—pointing the road to Muscovy, a Christian province. This was a great gleam of hope in his despair. He hastened on until he reached Ecopolis. There he found a warm reception; the ring was removed from his neck; he was given arms and money, and from thence made his way back, over Russia to Transylvania—turning up there as one risen from the dead. All rejoiced greatly over his return, but he now longed to rest from fighting; so Sigismund gave him liberally of money and he started for England, traveling through Germany, France and Spain.

In the latter country his money gave out, when the spirit of war again moved him, and he embarked for Morocco. But, he didn't like Morocco. The people were engaged in cutting one another's throats—not in fighting a common enemy. So Smith returned to the French vessel in which he had sailed, and in it put to sea on a cruise which was exciting enough even for the Englishman's restless nature, for, after making several prizes of Spanish vessels from Tenerife, the Frenchman was pursued by two Spanish vessels of war and brought to a fight which lasted through three days! Twice the Spaniards grappled and boarded, only to be driven overboard; and in the end the brave Frenchmen, with the mere wreck of a craft, put for the first French port.

From there Smith returned to England, reaching his old home A. D. 1604—when about twenty-five years of age. The fame of his exploits and the story of his remarkable adventures had preceded him, and he was everywhere received with marked notice. For one so young to have seen and experienced so much was rare even in those days of ceaseless wars, stirring adventure and territorial conquest.

His career as the pioneer of settlement and civilization in the New World we give in the succeeding paper.

Brave Barbara:
OR,
FIRST LOVE OR NO LOVE.

A STORY OF A WAYWARD HEART.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN,
AUTHOR OF "BLACK EYES AND BLUE," ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

STRUGGLING IN THE TRAP.

The evening of the nineteenth of December was wild, dark and stormy. The sky was utterly obscured by a pall of black, flying clouds, the wind roared in fitful gusts, the rain came down, at intervals, in torrents. The mighty disturbance of the elements without were echoed in the agitated bosom of Lady Alice Ross. She stood at the window of her chamber, looking out at the blackness of darkness, while the fierce wind clutched at the sash and rattled it, as if in defiance of the purpose which was gathering in her heart.

She had dismissed her maid and turned the key of her door. She had not been long from the dinner-table, where the gentlemen sat, and, which she had left without eating a mouthful, only swallowing the glass of sherry which the butler had poured out for her.

It must be nearly eight o'clock.
"What can I do?" she moaned, leaning her pale forehead against the glass, on the other side of which the rain beat mercilessly.

She had had a terrible interview with her father that day. Just after lunch he had come to her to say that the countess and he had made up their minds that it would be best for the wedding to take place on the morrow—Herbert was not getting along well, and it was important that he should go to a warmer climate at once. Why wait until Christmas! Everything was in readiness, and lingering until the twenty-fifth. There was no reason for a delay of five days, except that Christmas had been first fixed upon as the wedding-day—a mere whim which must yield to the plea of Herbert's health. In short, the matter was already decided by the parents, the earl was overjoyed, his man was packing his boxes, and Lady Alice must set her mind immediately to packing hers.

"But Delorme will not be here!" burst from Alice's blanched lips.

"We regret it, of course," responded Lord Ross, "but it is not of paramount importance. Should we delay until Christmas, there is no certainty that he will be here. We had a brief letter from him to-day, stating that the physicians had given his child up."

"But he would come—he would come, if it was his boy's funeral-day!" cried Lady Alice, wildly, forgetting all caution in her despair.

"We are not anxious to have him here," was the sneering reply.

"The countess will send her maid to assist Marie; have everything in readiness to-night, that you may not have to over-fatigue yourself in the morning."

He had turned to go, and his daughter had caught at his arm. "Father, you know that I do not love the earl—that he is not a man for any young girl to marry. Oh, father! would you chain me to that miserable epileptic! Why! his mind is already failing—I can see it! He will be an imbecile. Father! father, have mercy!—do not force me to marry a man like that!"

"Foolish girl! You are the imbecile. Refuse to marry an earl, with a rent-roll of a hundred thousand pounds a year! Getting foolish, is he! So much the better for you. You can have your own way!—you can even flirt with that other man whom you do like, if it pleases you, and helps you to while away the time. You will be a queen in society—have everything worth having—and help me—help your poor father, crushed under a weight of debt. But you never cared for me. You would not sacrifice a girl's idle whim to save me from shame and prison! But I will compel you to save me from ruin; it is your duty as my child. Prepare to wed the Earl on the morrow. Resistance is useless. You are under constant surveillance—so it will only result in your own discomfiture if you attempt any silly trick of flight. The countess and I are both resolved."

Alice sunk, gasping, upon a sofa; she looked up in the cruel face of her parent—who would crush her heart, that he might live in ease—and gasped out:

"Where are we—to be married?"

"In the cathedral. And you are to wear the bridal dress the countess has furnished, and to look as pretty as possible. The wedding will be strictly private; we do not intend the news of it shall get beyond the castle until the ceremony is over; but something is due to Herbert. You ought to adorn yourself for his sake. I trust that you will behave with propriety. Unless you promise to be guilty of no outbreak during the ceremony, we shall take you to London to be married by some clergyman who will not listen to your rantings."

"Oh! I promise," moaned Alice, thrilled with terror, lest she should be carried off where there was even less hope of Delorme being able to save her.

"Then it is all understood," ended Lord Ross. "Let the maids to work at once. Winter mornings are brief, you know."

But Lady Alice could not and did not give an order. She sat shivering on her sofa all the afternoon, while the countess, speaking as softly and kindly as if all were for the poor, portionless little lady's benefit, made all the arrangements, occasionally pausing in front of the bride's sofa, to lay her hand on the drooping head caressingly, or to ask a question. The countess really had become fond of the gentle girl, and coveted her for her son's wife, thinking more of his pleasure than of Lady Alice's, perhaps; but not fully realizing the repulsion which the latter felt to the union arranged for her by plotting parents.

Before night it had begun to storm, promising ill for the weather on the morrow. But Lord Ross had good reasons for haste, and would admit of no pause in the preparations. The cook, the butler, and their underlings, were busy with the wedding-breakfast; the gardener and his assistants were selecting the flowers and hot-house fruits for the table, and making up bouquets for the drawing-room and the church.

And the poor little bride stood alone in her room, her brow pressed to the cool glass whose touch helped to keep her brain steady, while she thought of a thousand mad plans of escape, every one of which she was obliged to reject.

She was startled from her reverie by the clock, on a shelf near the window, chiming eight.

"I will do it!" she muttered, and turning, she caught up a shawl which lay on a chair and threw it over her shoulders, over her rose-colored silk dress. Then she extinguished all the lights in the room, save one, which she shaded down into a dimness almost equal to the outer night, softly raised the window, leaned out, and felt about for the trellis which stood under it, reaching to within three feet of the sill, and supporting the strong, woody stems of a wisteria.

How she did it she did not herself realize; but in a few moments Lady Alice touched the ground. The beating of the tempest prevented any slight noise she made with the window from being noticed; the lights from the drawing-room, where the curtains were not yet drawn, gleamed out on the wet foliage, and showed her the way to the carriage-drive in front of the house.

Along this, an occasional lamp was lighted, and she fled along, keeping a sharp look-out for others who might be abroad. Suddenly she remembered that the gates would be locked, and that she would have to summon the porters to let her through. She turned and went along the lime-avenue, which would let her out, through a turnstile, on to a path through the woods and churchyard, and finally on to the public road, about two miles away.

Not a ray of light showed her the path, except when some flickering gleam of distant lightning played around her for a few seconds. Often she would have to wait for the lightning, before she could take another step. It seemed to her as if she would never reach the highway; yet, after a long struggle with the elements, she found herself on it. Here she could make better speed, or would have been able to, had it not been for the wind, which was blowing from over the sea, directly in her face, and nearly took her from her feet. Her light garments were wet through; the rain and wind nearly took her breath away—her strength gave out again and again—yet still she struggled on toward the village lights; which were now dimly visible, while the roar of the waves on the beach, even in that sheltered inlet, was deafening.

Miss Renelaer and Mr. Granbury were playing chess in the inn-parlor. There were no other guests, and they had the room to themselves. A fire blazed on the old stone hearth, casting ruddy gleams over the quaint mahogany furniture.

"I can not make a sensible move this evening," Barbara cried, at last, looking up with a shade of anxiety on her sweet face. "I am so troubled about papa. This storm is fearful on the ocean," and she looked at the windows, where the rain was beating, with a shudder of apprehension. "Mr. Granbury, there is some one—a girl—standing outside in the rain, and motioning me to raise the window. Will you see what it means?"

Arthur turned to the window and flung up the sash. Instantly a pale young creature sprang through, and stood eying them with wild, wild eyes.

"Are you the Americans?" she asked.

"We are."

"Then, for the love of Heaven, will you get a message taken to the station for me? I did not wish to go in the bar-room, for I should be recognized there; and no one must know that I have been out in such a storm. I am Lady Alice Ross."

"Who is visiting at the castle?" asked Barbara, quickly, even as she asked it running to turn the key of the door opening into the hall to keep out intruders.

"The same Lady Alice," responded the young girl, throwing off her dripping shawl, and standing before them in her rose-colored slip, with its long train, a string of great white pearls glimmering on her lovely neck, the braids of her golden hair blown into strands by the wind, and dark with rain, streaming almost to her feet.

"What brought you out, alone, such a night?" asked Granbury; but Barbara, albeit she saw her rival before her, was woman enough to take up one of the cold little hands and press it in silent sympathy.

"Something happened to-day at the castle. It was important that a friend of mine should

know it—and—that others should not know that I had consulted him. I will pay a guinea to any man or boy who will take a telegram to the railroad-station for me, to-night—immediately. If you will procure it sent you will save me from betraying my rash enterprise to the village gossips, and I will bless you forever."

"Where is the message?" Barbara kindly inquired.

"Ah, I had forgotten—it is not yet written."

"Here are writing-materials. Sit down and pen it, while Mr. Granbury goes out to find a messenger."

Barbara let Arthur through the door and relocked it.

"Now," she said, "here is the pen, Lady Alice."

Lady Alice sat down by the table and attempted to write.

"Will you do it for me?" she pleaded, after a minute, "my hand shakes so, I cannot form a letter."

"Certainly," answered Barbara, taking her place. "What shall I write?"

"Please will you say: 'Delorme Dunleath, Esq., No. 75, Joy Place, Eaton. Unless you are at the cathedral by eleven o'clock, to-morrow morning, it will be too late. Fly, for the sake of your little A. R.'"

Barbara's own hand began to tremble; but she wrote the message out, bravely, added the date, and placed it in an envelope, took it to the door, called Mr. Granbury, gave it to him, and, locking the door, came back and stood before the white creature who looked, in her pink slip, like a lily in a rose's dress.

"You must be in some great trouble to do such a thing as this," she said, sternly, and yet not unkindly. "If you need a friend confide in me. I, too, am a girl."

"I am in horrible trouble. My father and the countess are determined that I shall marry the earl. They have me shut up in the castle, quite in their power. I do not love the earl—I loath him. Delorme Dunleath, his cousin, and a man of honor, promised me to take me away in time to prevent the marriage; but he was called away to the dying bed of his child, and now they are hastening the wedding in his absence. They told me, this afternoon, that I must wed the earl to-morrow. I begged for delay, but they would not listen. Ah, if they force me into this marriage, I shall be the most unhappy creature that ever lived! Delorme would not allow it, if he were here. He would save me, at any cost!"

"You say this Delorme Dunleath promised to take you away—as his wife?"

"I have no doubt that he will marry me the moment we can reach a clergyman," answered Lady Alice, blushing, but looking proudly into the other's eyes. "We shall have to fly to Scotland, for I am not of age. He loves me, I know, for he has told me so."

"Ah!" murmured Barbara, drawing her breath hard and pressing her head to her bosom.

"Yes. It would break his heart as well as mine, if he should be too late," pursued Lady Alice.

"I pray Heaven, then, that he may be in time!"

"Oh, thank you, for your kind wish. May you, dear lady, be blessed and happy all your life long! I must pay for the telegram, and hasten back, before I am missed." She took from her pocket a little wallet, flashing with rose-diamonds—it had been her mother's—but the contents were not so rich as the purse; the golden guinea which she drew out was the only piece of money it contained.

"You see," she said, bitterly, "there was need I should be forced to marry for money."

"Poor child! Can it be that you must be sold—in this Christian land? Take courage! We will do our best to prevent it. If the worst comes to the worst—if Delorme fails to arrive—then you must refuse, before the very altar, to blacken your conscience with a false vow."

"Ah! I am so timid—so used to obey them. They will frighten me into obeying them—I know they will. If I were strong and brave, as I can see you are!" and she looked, with mournful admiration, into the spirited, resolute face of the American girl, sighing regretfully at the indomitable will she saw sparkling there, "if I were as brave as you!"

"You ought to have courage to save your own soul, Lady Alice. It is a dreadful thing to swear to love and honor one whom you declare you loath."

"Oh, it is!" murmured little Alice, shivering, "a dreadful, dreadful thing! I wish I were dead. Why cannot people die when life is so hard to bear?"

"Life ought not to be hard to bear, when Delorme Dunleath loves you," murmured Barbara, under her breath.

"I must go," suddenly exclaimed the runaway. "They will miss me, and force their way into my room. Do you promise to see that the telegram is dispatched at once? Unless he receives it before midnight, it will do no good."

"It shall be attended to, if I have to walk with it to the station myself."

"Again, ten thousand thanks. I must go at once."

"Stay until I speak to Mr. Granbury. He may be able to obtain a carriage and take you back to the castle."

"I dare not delay another moment."

"But you will gain time by riding, don't you see?"

Barbara went to the door, called Mr. Granbury, and ascertained that a covered vehicle was already being got ready for the errand to the telegraph-station at the railroad.

"I will go, inside, and take the lady with me. We can leave the telegram, and then reach the castle sooner than she could reach it by walking," said Arthur.

Barbara flew up-stairs, returning with a large waterproof cloak which she wrapped about the wet and trembling little figure; the carriage was brought close to the steps, and with her face closely concealed from prying eyes, Lady Alice was placed inside, and was followed by Arthur Granbury.

The driver, provided with lighted lamps on either side the seat, set out on his stormy adventure, urged by Granbury to all the speed which the rain and darkness would permit.

In less than half an hour the message was on its way, and the horses' heads turned toward Dunleath Castle. All the way there Lady Alice was sobbing, violently; from the moment the dispatch was on its way her fictitious strength had given way, and she yielded to the reaction. Arthur—who had, through all his amazement, been much struck by the *petite* beauty of the pale lady who had burst into the inn-parlor in so strange a way—was deeply moved by her suppressed sobs, as he rode by her side. He would fain have taken and pressed her cold little hand in token of sympathy; but was too delicate to offer any advances under such circumstances. They came to the lodge-gate, the portress came out and demanded names—"a visitor, from the station, to her

know it—and—that others should not know that I had consulted him. I will pay a guinea to any man or boy who will take a telegram to the railroad-station for me, to-night—immediately. If you will procure it sent you will save me from betraying my rash enterprise to the village gossips, and I will bless you forever."

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"You must be in some great trouble to do such a thing as this," she said, sternly, and yet not unkindly. "If you need a friend confide in me. I, too, am a girl."

ladyship, the countess," the driver had replied, and they had been admitted.

"Do not venture too near the house," pleaded Lady Alice.

"I will stop the driver here. You are in sight of the windows and can make your way without trouble. Heaven be with you, Lady Alice; and remember, whatever happens to-morrow, that you have two firm friends at the village inn. Do not hesitate to appeal to us in an emergency."

"I shall never forget you, sir; nor the beautiful young lady—never! What can I do to attest my gratitude?" and she suddenly flung her girlish arms about his neck and kissed him, as he lifted her from the carriage to the ground; then, fleeing like a startled wild creature, disappeared among the shrubberies.

The touch of those velvet lips lingered long on Arthur's cheek. It was a kiss of impulsive love and gratitude, from an innocent girl to whom he had done a great service—a kiss pure as a child's, and he so understood it. It warmed him for the dreary ride back to the inn.

Meantime, Lady Alice, faint and frightened, had more than one fall, and even a fall, in climbing the trellis, down which she had swung herself in the darkness. When she gained her room, she had no time to give way to the weakness which came over her; loud knocking at her door, and the sound of voices calling her name in tones of alarm, were followed by attempts to turn the key in the lock.

"What is it?" she asked, not daring to open the door until she could exchange her rain-drenched dress for another.

"Oh, you hear us at last," cried Lord Ross, in a voice of evident relief from great anxiety. "We did not know but that you were dead, as you gave us no answer."

"There is nothing the matter with me, papa. Have I fallen asleep on the sofa? What time is it? Wait a few moments, and I will come out, if you wish to speak to me."

CHAPTER XX.

"TOO LATE! TOO LATE!"

BARBARA slept very little that night of Lady Alice's strange visit. The ocean gale howled and shrieked about the ancient inn as if all the Furies of the deep were out on the hunt for drowning human souls. She lay covering in the great, old-fashioned bed, listening to the unearthly music of the storm, trembling to think that the steamer which bore her father was out in the tempest; and painting over and over again, against the darkness, with vivid imagination, the picture of Lady Alice as she had appeared before her that evening.

"She had a child's face," she thought, "sweet and pure—but too lacking in character. She is a soft, yielding little creature; just such a woman as some men dream of for a wife—meek, obedient, affectionate—no mind of her own. She is just suited to Arthur Granbury, if he could only see it. He likes a woman to be just a polished mirror, reflecting her husband. Little Lady Alice will make that kind of a wife. She did a wild thing to-night—but he was driven to it. The huntsmen had scared the timid creature out of its covert. It was against every fiber of her nature to do such a thing."

"How lovely she looked, even in that disheveled state; her round, white arms bare, the pearls shining on her fair neck, her long hair streaming! She must be exquisite when she is at peace and moving properly in her proper sphere."

"She thinks Delorme loves her. I once thought he loved me. Has he a new heart to give away every three months? Oh, what a villain he must be! He has told me falsehood once. I must never forget that. I dare say he told Lady Alice that she is the only woman he ever loved! Yet she knows that he has been married, and is a father, for she spoke of his child. 'His child!' poor little fellow, he is dying! Oh, I wish that my prayers could save him to his father—and his mother. She feels terribly—she telegraphed me this afternoon. Alas! how much trouble there is in the world. I wish papa was safely here! I wish Lady Alice was safely married to Delorme! I wish the child was well. I wish Mr. Granbury would not keep telling me how he loves me. I wish—I wish—that everything was different!" and Barbara began to cry warm tears of self-pity and distress for others, and nervousness on account of the storm.

When she had shed a great many tears she felt better; she was quite sure the wind did not shriek so uncannily; she was almost willing that Delorme Dunleath should come riding, on the morrow, to the rescue of Lady Alice Ross; she drew the faded silken quilt over her ears, so that she might not hear the storm, and with many little sobs and long-drawn sighs at last lost her troubles in sleep.

When she awoke the morning shone brightly. The blue bay rolled grandly in sight of the window; were it not that the waves yet ran high and were edged with foam, there had been no reminder of the night's noisy tempest.

"I wonder what will happen to-day," thought Barbara, springing up in bed, while all the rosy color natural to her faded into pallor, as she recalled the words of Lady Alice; "I have no doubt that he will marry me—we shall have to fly to Scotland."

"Why did I send the message?" asked Barbara, wildly, of her own heart. "I might have contrived that it should not have been sent. I might have kept Delorme away—and then Lady Alice would have been forced into this other marriage—and then—what a wicked girl I am! How can I have such thoughts? Would I have anything to say to the traitor, no matter whose wife Lady Alice was? Do I not despise him with my whole soul? Why do I think of him at all? I will not honor him even by a place in my thoughts—but I will do what I can for that poor girl."

A glow of resolution lighted up her wonderful eyes. Ringing her bell, a maid came in, who attended to her fire, brought her water for a bath, placed her silken wrappers and slippers near, and took down her orders for breakfast, which, half an hour later, was served in her room. While Barbara ate her breakfast her straight dark brows were knitted in deep thought.

"Alas!" was the conclusion of all her thinking. "I am afraid I am powerless to aid her!" Lady Alice Ross, meantime, had also awakened out of a fevered and moaning sleep, and her breakfast—a light meal preceding the wedding-breakfast of state at twelve o'clock—had been served in her room, by smiling and attentive servants.

None of the household beyond the countess, Lord Ross and the personal attendant of the earl, Jackson, suspected that Lady Alice was an unwilling bride. The maids and men were in high spirits at the prospect of feasting and merry-making and all the excitement of the occasion.

The female servants were inventing errands to the bride's chamber, that they might have a glimpse of her, while her toilet was in progress.

The countess made a magnificent toilet for

herself early; and then hastened to superintend that of the young girl she hoped soon to call daughter. She saw that Lady Alice was very pale and quiet; but she was too prudent to make harassing remarks.

"It is for her own good," she quieted her conscience by thinking. "Where else can she hope to make such a marriage? I shall be a mother to her; and in a few weeks she herself will be reconciled, and even happy. I trust Herbert's heart is set upon her; I cannot disappoint him," and so, with tasteful, light touches, and a few loving words to the cold, quiet bride, she assisted the maids to make more lovely the loveliness of her son's choice.

"And now," whispered the countess, with a kiss on the smooth young cheek when all was done, "may I bring Herbert for a look at his bride? You are perfect, and I want him to see you."

"Oh, yes, madam, certainly," answered the bride, indifferently; and she stood there quite motionless, just as they had placed her when they had pinned on the veil and orange-blossoms with a superb diadem of diamonds; she hardly understood what she had been asked; her mind was fixed on one point—the train which should, if all went well, bring Delorme, arrived at Dunleath station at five minutes before eleven—she had heard them say that they proposed to reach the cathedral at a quarter after eleven—this would give him twenty minutes to reach the church, also—a distance of three miles. What if the train should be delayed—even a few minutes? This was the question in Lady Alice's mind when the countess returned with her son to show him his bride.

She looked up, startled, as Herbert, his black eyes glowing with fiery love and admiration, lifted her hand to his lips—looked up at him, and the anxious question was in her blue, dilated eyes, which never smiled on the bridegroom, but shone with such wild, strange luster, glittering with a light, not of happiness, but of feverish expectancy. She had been white as a snow-drop when they began to dress her; but the chill had given place to fever, and now her fair face wore a bloom so much like that of love and joy, and maiden timidity, that Herbert was deceived by it.

"By heaven, she is as beautiful as a seraph, this morning!" he said to himself. She would not look like this if she hated me.

He was feeling and looking unusually well. Still, his proud mother was nervous, and would be until the ceremony was over; there was never any anticipating of Herbert's attacks, and he might fall at the very foot of the altar. It was this apprehension of a mortifying possibility which had determined her to have the marriage strictly private. Still it would not do for an earl of Dunleath to fail to be married in Dunleath cathedral, and, therefore, the sacred rites were to be performed, after immemorial custom, in the church.

No rumor of the approaching marriage had gone abroad; the rector had, only that morning, been informed that his services would be required that day, with an injunction to mention it to no one until the affair was over.

Herbert left in Alice's burning hand an exquisite bridal bouquet of white rose-buds, violets and lilies-of-the-valley, and retired to await impatiently, in company with Lord Ross, the appearance of the carriages at the door.

Lord Ross was dressed for the occasion, looking satisfied and complacent, as well he might; for the settlements, made the evening before, had been most satisfactory. Yet he was not entirely free from uneasiness. Like the countess, he was impatient for the affair to be over. He was too wise a man of the world to know by heart the proverb, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip."

Every other minute he consulted his watch; finally announcing:

"Ten minutes of eleven—time we were in the carriages. Would not look well to be late at your own wedding, eh, Herbert?"—and he went for his daughter, for the horses were stamping on the stone pavement under the porte cochere.

"Come, Alice, we shall be late."

"One moment, papa. Maria, will you look at the fastening of my shoe—I am sure it is untied."

"Come, come, Alice!"

"Yes, papa—but I have dropped my handkerchief. I can not come until that is found."

It was eleven o'clock—ten minutes had Lady Alice kept her father waiting at the door, and his brow was black with wrath—when the bride came down the grand staircase on Lord Ross's arm. He hurried her forward unceremoniously, and almost thrust her into the satin-lined carriage which awaited her.

There were two or three carriages, but only one was occupied, until the countess gave gracious permission to such of the servants as could be spared to fill the others. It seemed strange to these retainers that not a guest had been bidden to the wedding—but they were used to their lady's imperious ways, and understood that the master's health accounted for all. And so the brief cortege was whirled away, through the pale winter sunshine, to the cathedral.

One visitor had applied to the sexton for admission, and taken a seat not far from the altar, before the arrival of the bridal party.

This was Arthur Granbury. He had gone early, at Barbara's request, who had enjoined him to be on the alert, and if Lady Alice appeared to him, be ready to afford her assistance and protection, even against her own father.

"We are not in our own country," Arthur had answered, cautiously, realizing more of the difficulties of the case than the lady did; still, he did not think of disobeying Barbara, and went where she told him to.

Barbara did not accompany him. She had engaged the best pair of horses in the little village, and was, with a carriage and driver, at the railroad station, awaiting the arrival of the train. She sat there, wrapped in her furs, pale and calm, thinking not so much of what Delorme would think or say to meet her there, as of the summons she was to give him, and the aid she was to afford him and Lady Alice—for the carriage was to convey them, full-speed, to the cathedral; and when the wedding-party drove up, Delorme was to snatch the bride, place her in this conveyance, and the driver was to dash off, pell-mell, with the eloping pair.

Her watch, which needed repairs, since its long sea-bath, was not going; she spoke to the driver:

"Is not the train behind time?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Miss. I'll just run in and look at the station-clock," and dismounting, he entered the little building, emerging a few seconds later with the information that it was eleven o'clock, and the agent had word, by telegraph, that the train was off the track, and would not be on for two hours.

"Off the track!" cried Barbara. "Oh, is any one injured?"

"I'll go in an' ax, Miss," said the obliging driver.

"No one seriously hurt," was the report; and then, this harrowing fear that Delorme might be maimed or killed off her mind, Barbara began to ask herself—"What is to be done, now?"

It was only in moments of need that the bravery of Barbara's spirit asserted itself above all conventionalities—above all personal fear. As in that scene in Central Park she risked, and nearly lost, her own life, for a woman she had every reason to hate—so now, for this other one, who had told her that Delorme Dunleath loved her, her great soul rose superior to self, and she asked herself, panting:

"What is to be done, now?"

Every fiber of her being thrilled with the desire to save this girl from the dreaded fate now—even now—being consummated.

Yet what could she, Barbara Rensselaer, do, in such a crisis?

(To be continued—commenced in No. 340.)

A VISION.

BY HARRIET ESTHER WARNE.

A little golden head is resting
Close in mother's arms to-night,
With peevish eyelids softly drooping
O'er the childish eyes so bright.

Mother kind looks down upon him,
Gently smooths his fussy hair,
And, dreaming, looks into the future,
Murmuring for her child a prayer.

Praying Heaven will bless her darling—
Guard him from an evil fate—
Watch and guide him till he enters
At the city's Golden Gate.

And again the baby darling
Pressed no more to mother's heart,
But the eyes refuse to open,
Or the rosy lips to part.

On the dainty, blue-veined forehead
Lie so still the curls of gold,
And the dimpled hands are whiter
Than the waxen flowers they hold.

In a tiny rosewood casket
Rests the darling of her heart,
Like a lily gently broken,
Can she calmly bear her part?

Shall she praise the hand that smites her?
Shall she meekly kiss the rod?
In her heart then springs rebellion,
Grief has turned her soul from God.

She tries to clasp him to her bosom
And restore the vital spark,
But her strength at last has failed her,
And to her world is dark.

Though her eyes had closed in darkness,
They were opened in the light
That came from the throne of Heaven
And the crowns of angels bright.

Now before her gaze arising,
Like a vision in the air,
A white throne, with angels kneeling,
And a babe so wondrous fair.

And they crowned the little cherub
With a wreath of lilies white,
Gathered from Eden's fabled gardens
For the golden tresses bright.

One white-robed seraph softly speaking:
"Turner, weep not, but behold,
Thy babe has changed a cross of sorrow
For an angel's crown of gold."

Then the vision slowly faded,
Ere her babe she could recall;
She tried to clasp the fleeting treasure,
But she grasped a sable pall.

Then o'er the sick-lined coffin bending,
From the golden curls took one,
And with bowed head, softly whispering:
"God knows best, His will be done!"

Applying the Test.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

PRETTY Belle sat with her elbow resting on Fred Harper's desk—she had stopped with Minnie Harper at Fred's office on her way up-town—her chin resting on her dimpled hand, and a thoughtful look on her lovely face. In her lap lay an open letter, and it was this they were discussing so earnestly.

"I don't care," said Belle, half-defiantly; "I know I'll never like him, and I don't want to go down to grandpa's to meet him."

"But then, the money!" suggested Minnie.

"Well, half of it is enough for me. Or I could live on what I have, if I lose it all! I'd rather lose it than marry Dolph Chester. Besides, grandpa didn't want me, if I didn't care for him—only you know he wanted Dolph to have part of his money, and he hated to divide the estate. But, it will have to be done."

"Perhaps not. You don't know Dolph yet, Belle."

"No, but I know I'll never like him. I feel it in my bones, as old Aunt Betty does a rain coming. Fred!" turning suddenly to Fred Harper, "you know Mr. Chester; what sort of a man is he?"

Fred hesitated, then answered, almost coldly: "I prefer to let you form your own opinion."

But he turned paler as he spoke, and Belle looked keenly at him.

"Not favorable, to say the least of it," she said. "Oh, if I could only see him without his seeing me, I would be so glad."

"You can do that easily," returned Fred. "See, it is five minutes to ten. At ten I expect him here, on a little matter of business. If you choose to step into my private office, back of the red curtain there, you will find a comfortable arm-chair, and you can observe Mr. Chester through the curtain when he does not dream of it."

"I'll do it!" cried Belle, springing up. "Let me go at once!"

"And what will I do?" pouted Minnie.

"You! Oh, you'll go about your business," said her brother; "two of you in there would make a noise and spoil it all."

"I'll tell you, Minnie," said Belle; "you run down to Dorsey's and get that lace, while I wait a few minutes, then come back for me."

"Very well, that will do. Don't let Mr. Chester stay long, Fred, for we have heaps of shopping to do this morning," said Minnie, as she went off down-stairs.

Fred took Belle into the little office, and seated her in his own arm-chair, close to the curtain.

As he turned to go, Belle laid her hand on his arm, and said, earnestly:

"Fred, won't you tell me whether you like Mr. Chester or not?"

Fred looked down into her sweet face, pressed her hand gently in his, and answered:

"I do not like him. But I may be prejudiced. Please judge for yourself, Belle." He looked as if he would like to say more, but a step rung in the hall without, and Fred hastily darted through the curtain.

When Mr. Chester had taken his leave, Belle came out of her nook, and went up to Fred's desk with a very bright face.

"Well!" he said, simply.

"Well!" answered Belle. "I have seen him, and, Fred, I never will marry that man!"

Fred looked earnestly at her.

"I wonder if you would marry another man. If you were only half as rich, I would ask you."

Belle turned the sweetest face she had ever shown to her friend's brother.

"Wait a little, and I shall only be half as rich, and then you may ask me, Fred!"

At that instant Minnie came tripping in.

"Have you seen him? I met him down-stairs!" she cried.

"Yes, I saw him," replied Belle.

"Well, how do you like him?"

"Not at all."

"You don't?"

"No! But he was grandpa's choice, and before I finally cast him off, I am going to try him."

"How?" questioned Minnie and Fred in one breath.

"I'll show you! Fred, didn't Mr. Chester say he was going down to Riverview, to-day?"

"He did."

"Well—I am going with him."

"You!" cried brother and sister.

"Come, Minnie, let's go home, and please let me have the shabbiest suit you can find in the house—an old waterproof and a cast-off hat will do."

"But what are you going to do?" cried Minnie.

"I think I guess!" said Fred. "Go along, Min, and help her all you can. It will be time for the train, soon."

Therefore, behold Belle, next, tightly banding up her golden hair in Minnie's chamber.

"Oh, you can't make your hair look ugly, do what you will!" cried Minnie, watching the process.

"Never mind; I'll twig it up as tight as possible! Minnie, pull the braid off that waterproof, please."

But, Belle, it will look so awful shabby.

"Well, that's what I want! Now, the hat, and the green veil. And help me roll my own suit and hat into a big bundle, such as the shop sewing-girls carry. Now I am ready. Shall I do?"

"Do! Oh, Belle, your own sister wouldn't know you!"

"All right, then. There's the car. Good-by now till you hear from me."

The train was just moving from the depot, and Mr. Dolph Chester was comfortably established with his paper, his back squared round to the end of the seat, when a timid touch on his shoulder roused him.

"Sir, is this seat engaged?"

Dolph gave a contemptuous look at the plain, shabby young girl with a large bundle, then slowly took down his feet and turned himself around to the window.

"I reckon not," he said, almost insolently.

The girl entered the seat, and made an effort to put her big bundle in the rack over their heads. Dolph never offered to assist her, and finding it too clumsy for her small strength, was obliged to hold it upon her lap.

When they stopped at Riverview, a slight shower was falling. "Oh, my work will be wet! What shall I do?" said the sewing-girl, with a glance at Dolph. He had his large umbrella in his hand, but he only muttered something about "not waiting on paupers," and got off as hastily as he could, leaving the young girl and her big bundle to do the best they could for themselves.

And thus he failed to notice that the girl went no further than the hotel just across the platform.

When Dolph again hastened into the little station in time for the evening train to the city, no one was there except a lovely lady, with drooping golden braids and curls, in a rich traveling dress of gray pongee. Dolph quickly noted all those little appointments which mark the well-bred and wealthy traveler, even to the gleam of a heavy chain-bracelet on her white wrist, and the tiny Russia-leather traveling-bag.

"She's a stunner! Wonder if she goes on this train?" he thought, as he went up to get his ticket.

He was seated in the car, when the elegant lady came in, and passed, hesitatingly, up the aisle.

There were half-a-dozen empty seats, but Dolph sprang up to offer his, with a polite bow. "Will you share my seat, madam? Next the window, if you prefer."

"Thank you, sir." The lady sat smilingly down, and Mr. Dolph made every exertion to be agreeable to his fair neighbor. But he did not succeed in finding out her name. When they reached the city, he assisted her most gallantly to the platform.

"Can I be of service further?" he inquired.

"It would be the greatest pleasure—"

"Thank you, sir, no. I have friends waiting," said the lady, and immediately disappeared in the crowd pressing toward the ladies' room.

It was quite dark when Belle entered Mr. Harper's parlor. Minnie was out, and Fred, having just come in to supper, stood before the grate.

"Belle," said he, "Why, Minnie has gone to the depot to meet you?"

"Well, I missed her and got here first, that's all," said Belle, with a smile.

"Did you succeed in your mission to Riverview?" asked Fred.

"Entirely! I discovered that Mr. Dolph Chester has one way of treating a poor, shabby sewing-girl, and quite another of deporting himself to a fine lady. He is no true man, Fred—no true gentleman."

"Well, what then?"

"Why, then, I'll tell you my plan. I'll go to grandpa's and I'll meet Mr. Dolph Chester, and dispose of him most effectually!"

Fred laughed.

"And when you have done that, and are quite free, Belle, will you write me word to come to you?"

"Yes, I will," answered Belle.

Mr. Dolph Chester sat in the prim, handsome, old-fashioned parlor of Fair Oaks, awaiting the presence of Miss Deane, when the door opened, and a shabby girl in a plain waterproof, whom he at once knew to be the one who had shared his seat on his trip down to Riverview, came in.

"Did you wish to see me, sir?" she asked.

"I—a—no, ma'am. I asked to see Miss Deane."

"Oh! I will tell her!" said the girl, disappearing.

"Seamstress for the house, I reckon. But it's odd I meet her here!" said Dolph.

Presently the door opened again, and, behold!—the lovely lady in silver gray pongee stood before him!

"Miss Deane! Is it possible?" stammered Dolph, in pleased surprise.

"Quite certain!" said the little lady. "You see we have met before, Mr. Chester! But you like me better in this dress than in the old waterproof, don't you?"

"I—I—don't comprehend!" said Dolph.

"Ah, don't you? Then I tell you, Mr. Chester, that the shabby girl who met you a moment ago, was myself in another dress. The gentleman who will not be as much a gentleman to a poor sewing-girl as to a queen, is no true man, Mr. Chester, and can never win my

love or my hand. The papers which secure you your half of grandpa's fortune, may be drawn up whenever you please, and my half I will keep. That is all. Now I have the honor to wish you good-evening."

With a bow of mock courtesy, before the crestfallen Dolph could utter a word, she sailed out of the room, and left him alone.

Two days later, Fred Harper stood in the old-fashioned parlor, holding Belle's pretty, dimpled hand.

"Well, have you sent Mr. Chester about his business?" said he.

"Yes, I have!" said Belle.

"And what are you going to do with me?"

"Whatever you want me to, I suppose."

"I want you to marry me! Will you do that, Belle?"

"Yes, I believe so!"

"One word more, then: do you love me, darling?" drawing her close to him. And Belle, as she rested her head upon his shoulder, answered, softly:

"I have loved you all the time, Fred!"

Under the Surface: OR Murder Will Out.

A STORY OF PHILADELPHIA.

BY WM. MASON TURNER, M. D.

AUTHOR OF "UNDER RAIL," "MABEL VANE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SILKEN CORD.

AS CLINTON CRAIG leaned over and grasped the cord in his strong hands, a strange, unaccountable thrill passed through him. He shook like a leaf, as a wild shudder shot over his frame. Bracing his feet against the sides of his staunch little boat, he put forth his strength, and commenced to haul in, hand over hand, slowly, yet steadily, the heavy something attached to the end of the cord; and then, at last, good heavens! a wild, piercing cry from Alice Ray, a half-cry of alarm from Clinton Craig, broke on the air. Slowly, above the surface of the water, in the little patch of moonlight that struggled through the bridge, the body of a man, the face hideous and eaten away, the bare skull, the clothes hanging about the skeleton form in shreds and tatters, appeared, terrible and ghastly.

Alice Ray had swooned with very terror, and was lying in the stern-sheets of the boat, sobbing and moaning; but Clinton Craig slowly drew the dead form to him, and taking an extra turn around the rattling skeleton, lifted it into the boat. As, with feelings of loathing and disgust, he deposited it on the bottom of the little skiff, a huge bag, evidently loaded with weights, broke loose, fell with a splash and sunk out of sight in the waters.

Slowly, Clinton Craig lifted his little anchor from its muddy bed. Then, his boat, feeling the current, floated swiftly out into the broad glare of the moonlight. He guided it not, but leaning down over the decayed, mutilated corpse, gazed fixedly at it. Suddenly he stopped lower; a sudden sight had caught his eye. He bent down, and without any hesitation grasped it. Furiously he tugged at it.

It was a dirk-knife imbedded firmly in the vertebrae of the neck.

At length, by a mighty effort, he tore it out and held it up in the bright moonbeams.

With one loud cry of exultation, Clinton Craig staggered back to Alice, and murmured: "God be thanked! God be thanked! The murderer and the murdered are found; that man is my poor adopted father; and that dirk is the property of Algernon Floyd. Read here, too, the name engraved on this jeweled knife—read it, Alice."

man at his feet, "now, my respected relative, you see how valuable to me is this old silk sash, and how nobly now this queer old dirk-knife does me a turn," and with his right hand he drew a dagger, and raising it on high, he drove it, with a vicious, vengeful force, down deep into the old man's neck.

One terrible shudder, and the body lay still. "Ha! by heavens! that was a good thrust, Jem! But I have jammed the old knife between the bones and can't get it out. It matters not, he is welcome to it!"

"Whist! Algy! whist! I hear cars! Quick! the bag to this feet, and overboard with him! Quick, Algy!—so—and it's all right!" he said, as the tall man did as directed, and hove the weighted body overboard into the dark waters. "Pity we hadn't searched his pockets! But come, Jem, give way! Give way! You have work to-night yet, I, to-morrow. But what is done is done well done!"

"Excellent! well, Algy."

This was the boat which was followed ashore by old Moll on a particular night, the scenes of which have been fully described before; it was old Thompson Floyd who slept that night, by treachery, the last long sleep beneath the waters of the freezing Schuylkill; it was Jem Walton who pulled the "stroke," and Algonon Floyd the "bow," in the little boat that night; it was Algonon Floyd who murdered, in cold blood, his own uncle, and it was he who fired the vengeful shot at old Moll, though he knew not who it was. He had a secret already, and he wanted it well kept.

CHAPTER XXIX.

RIGHTED.

The barge-house was lighted with a dozen candles hanging from the joists above. The beams shone upon a singular-looking group collected there.

Crouching near the door, her face buried in her hands, her frame shivering with terror, was Alice Ray.

Clinton Craig stood by her, his face stern, yet exultant, his eyes burning with a singular yet helpful luster. Now and then he stooped and spoke words of comfort and cheer to the maiden, while he gently laid his hand upon the uncovered head of golden tresses.

Stretched upon a board in the center of the room was the hideous object—the dead body of the long-missing Thompson Floyd—fished from the waters by Clinton Craig.

Already the coroner was there, with a hastily-collected jury. They were all clustered around the repulsive object, gloomy and silent. Near by, stern and collected, stood the coroner's physician, Dr. Frode—his arms across his chest, his eyes glancing occasionally at the skeleton remains on the board, and then at Clinton Craig.

"Our duty is plain, gentlemen," at length said the coroner. "Dr. Ashe, state your opinion as to the manner of death of this man—Thompson Floyd, beyond a doubt—judging from what we have thus strangely learned."

"But a few words are necessary, sir; and, gentlemen," answered the doctor, "my opinion is that this man—Thompson Floyd—was first strangled with this sash until life was nearly extinct. But the knife, pulled from the bone by Mr. Craig, completed the murderous work. That knife was driven by a strong and steady hand, and judging from its position when found, the blade must have severed the external jugular vein and carotid artery at a blow. Death was, of course, then, almost instantaneous; and the man was dead before he was flung into the water."

In a few moments the jury rendered a verdict in accordance with the facts.

"We will now proceed to search the body," said the coroner, at the same time appointing two of the jury to perform the disagreeable task.

These gentlemen at once set to work. The overcoat pockets contained nothing but a pair of buck-skin gloves and a handkerchief. Next the inside coat was searched. In the breast-pocket of this garment was found a short-revolving pistol. The coroner examined it closely.

Every chamber was loaded.

As this was announced, Dr. Ashe glanced significantly at Clinton Craig, who still stood near Alice Ray, speaking low, soothing words in her ear.

Though the wound in the young man's arm had long been well in fact forgotten—yet he understood that look, and as a strange, ghastly smile swept over his face, he telegraphed back an answer.

The other pockets of the coat contained nothing else of special value. In the vest pockets was found a roll of notes, water-soaked and valueless. The heavy watch was also found lying in its wonted pocket—the massive guard-chain being hooked into the shabby button-hole.

Then the rotten pantaloons were searched. One pocket contained a key. It was at once recognized as that fitting the iron safe in the Floyd mansion. The other pocket contained a large old-fashioned leather purse, wet through and almost dropping to pieces.

The search was ended.

The coroner took the old pocket-book, and pressing the water from it, carefully spread out the flaps. A few silver coins, and a decayed bank-note or so, were found. In addition to these, a small compact package, about two inches square, was taken out. This was a singular-looking parcel; it was wrapped in every direction with twine which still retained its strength.

The coroner cut the cords, and began to unwrap the package.

Every one—even Clinton Craig and Alice—drew near and gazed breathlessly on.

The first wrapper was of stout parchment. It had entirely resisted the action of the water. Another wrapper was removed. It was of rubber. Then came the twine again. This was cut and another layer of parchment, and another of rubber were taken off. And so on until nine wrappers were laid on the table. At last all were removed, and two separate papers, folded into squares, and as hard almost as ivory, rolled out. They were perfectly dry.

With a look of intense wonder on his face, the coroner opened the little square packages and laid them before him. A pin might have been heard to fall in that little assemblage, as the gentleman gazed with awe and surprise at the outspread sheets.

The rippling waters of the Schuylkill, hurrying along outside, and splashing against the little wharf of the barge-house, sounded low and musically clear within.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the coroner, in a low, husky, half-frenzied breath. "The mystery is solved at last! and by chance or Providence has brought a terrible murder to light; and that same mysterious Providence has unveiled the murderer. Mr. Craig, I hold here two papers, one directed to you, the other in which you are interested."

Dr. Ashe, collected as he was, stern as he was, trembled with excitement and strode up by the coroner. And Alice Ray had arisen

to her feet, and with her hand on the shoulder of the roughly-clad man whom she loved, leaned over and looked on.

"Here is the paper for you, Mr. Craig, or Floyd, as you should properly be called."

"Merciful heavens! what is this?" exclaimed Clinton Craig, as he clutched, in his nervous hand, the open sheet.

One glance at the superscription, and with a wild cry, the young man staggered backward. He would have fallen, but for the strong arm of Fred Ashe, who grasped him. The paper fluttered from his grasp; but the young physician caught it with his left hand.

And then, amid a terrible silence, he read the following lines:

"TO MY WELL-BELOVED SON, CLINTON CRAIG FLOYD. To be read when I am no more."

Then the doctor carefully folded the sheet, so closely-written over, and pushed it into the pocket of his friend.

"Arouse yourself! for the dead has spoken!" whispered the doctor, in his friend's ear.

Slowly, Clinton Craig—such we shall continue to call him—recovered himself; slowly he straightened up, and, crossing his hands upon his chest, stood erect.

Alice Ray clung to him, tearfully, her soft blue eyes lifted half-timidly to his stern face.

"Mr. Craig, I hold in my hands a paper, which, as I said a moment ago, concerns you, almost vitally. Be quiet, gentlemen; I will read the document, which is as valid to-day, as when it was written, and which has been so miraculously preserved that its requirements may still be carried out. Listen."

As he spoke, the coroner's voice trembled, despite his efforts. Pausing for a moment, and clearing his throat, he read, in a clear, distinct voice:

"In the name of God, amen! I, Thompson Floyd, being of sound mind and fair bodily health, make and ordain the following, as my last will and testament."

"Item 1st. To my nephew, Algonon Floyd, son of my well-beloved brother, Kimbly Floyd, now deceased, I give the sum of one thousand dollars per annum, during his natural life. Should he marry, it is my wish that the sum above mentioned be divided, the same to descend to his children, should he be blessed with issue, after his death."

"Item 2d. To the Corporation of the Fairmount Park Association, Philadelphia, I give and bequeath the sum of ten thousand dollars, to be used as may seem best to the said corporation."

"Item 3d. The remainder of my estate, both real and personal, I give and bequeath to my dear, well-beloved and natural son, Clinton Craig Floyd, to be possessed and enjoyed by him and his heirs forever."

"Done this tenth day of June, 1885."

(Signed) Thompson Floyd.
(Witnesses) ALBERT ASHMEAD, RICHARD PETERSON.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 338.)

THE PATIENT MOTHER.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

By the cradle sits a mother,
Watching o'er her sleeping child,
That has sunk at last in slumber
From its playing long and wild.

Little hands and feet so restless,
Busy through the livelong day,
By the mother have been folded
Careful, tenderly away.

But the mother still all fondly
Watches with a weary eye,
Though the low, sweet notes have vanished
Of her off-sung lullaby.

In her lap her hands are resting,
And her head at times droops low,
As the cradle she is rocking,
Weary-footed, to and fro.

But at last sweet sleep o'erpowers,
And her heavy eyelids close,
Till both child and anxious mother
Find themselves in calm repose.

No'er was seen a sweeter picture
Than this patient mother's love:
Surely it is well recorded
In the record of Above.

The Parson and Revolver.

BY HENRI MONTCALM.

MRS. MEHTABLE MARTIN was perfectly charmed with her autumn boarder, as no wonder; for Miss Kate Wildwyl was the most charming young person one could possibly imagine. Indeed, Mrs. Mehtable was so well pleased with her that before the young lady had been at the farm a week, the good woman had made up her mind that Miss Wildwyl was quite good enough for the only other person in the world with whom Mrs. Mehtable Martin was entirely satisfied, viz.: the Rev. Mr. Grace.

"You oughter know our parson, Miss Kate," she said one morning while the young lady was helping her hostess wash up the breakfast dishes, very much against the latter's will.

"Oh, I hate ministers!" was the emphatic response. "They're always so poky."

"But, Parson Grace is a gentleman, every inch of him."

"How many inches are there of him?"

"My gracious! At least six times twelve. He's tremendous strong for a preacher. I'd risk him anywhere, of his dander was up. They do say, too, that he carries a pistol. He never used to, though, when he boarded with me."

"Then it was the minister who was my predecessor?"

"Yes. He has a housekeeper and lives at the parsonage now. I s'pose he'll be gittin' married pretty soon. You'll see him nex' Sunday."

"Perhaps I shall see him before. I'm going down to the post-office myself, this morning. It's only a mile to the Center, is it?"

"That's all, an' a short one at that. You might hear the horse, only Jonathan's usin' him."

"Oh, never mind. I'm used to walking."

So in the middle of the October forenoon Miss Kate Wildwyl started off in her walking-dress, down the road and over the hill toward the Center. It was rather a lonely road just there. At the foot of the hill on the other side there was a stream, which came out of the woods, and running beneath a bridge, hid itself away again among the trees on the other side. As she came down the hill toward the bridge she heard the report of a gun or pistol, and somehow or other she could not help connecting it in her mind with what Mrs. Martin had been telling her about the parson. Grace, was his name! A very suggestive one for a clergyman. As she drew still nearer the bridge she was startled by a crashing in the bushes beside the road some distance in front of her, and to her great dismay she saw three rough-looking men coming toward her. She recognized them at once as a trio of tramps who had stopped at the house that morning. They were plainly brutal, and in an instant all the horrible stories she had ever heard of the desperate deeds of such persons flashed through her mind. She stopped and would have turned back to run but her limbs seemed about to give way beneath her. Only the bridge was between her and them. She felt that she could not escape—she had just strength enough to utter a piercing scream. One of them—the ugliest and

most powerful of the three—grunted an oath, and stepped faster. He was beside her—he had seized hold of her hand roughly, and she sunk down at his feet as she heard him say:

"What's the use o' screamin' so, my pretty bird? Nobody'll hear ye. Come, now, give me a kiss with them rosy lips of your'n!"

Then he was bending over her and she felt his reeking breath upon her face, when, suddenly, from behind, she heard a new voice, whose cool, determined tones reassured her at once.

"My good friends," it said, "be good enough to release that lady's hand and go about your business."

The tramp looked up in surprise. Within a dozen feet and walking easily toward him he saw a young man, tall and rather slender, in an unmistakable clerical dress, and a tall hat. This new-comer looked anything but warlike and the tramp laughed coarsely.

"You're werry kind," he said, gruffly, "but I ain't your good friend, all the same. Take my advice and don't step foot on this bridge."

The parson (for it was he) paid no attention to this, but came straight on. He had laughing blue eyes and a full chestnut beard, close-cut and curly. He was now within six feet of Miss Wildwyl and the man. The other two tramps were just behind their leader. The latter cried out again:

"Dye heart! Right about face, or by the Eternal—"

He did not finish his sentence. He let go the girl's hand and straightened up suddenly. The slight young man had quickened his pace, and all at once, swift as lightning, before the other fairly comprehended his intention, an arm—half-dozed feet long—shot out suddenly from the parson's side and planted a blow squarely between the man's eyes.

He staggered back, and would have fallen but for one of his comrades. The parson paid no more attention to him, but turned to the young lady.

"Did he do you any harm, Miss?" he asked, respectfully. "There is no need to be frightened. They will not."

The young lady interrupted him with a cry, pointing with her finger and then burying her face in her hands.

Mr. Grace whirled around and faced the tramp again, who was advancing, once more, this time somewhat cautiously and with the evident intention of grappling with his adversary if possible. He was a little afraid of the parson's long arms.

But the latter seemed quite as willing to meet him one way as another. He never moved a muscle until the huge fellow was close to him. Then, with another quick movement, he threw his arms about him, and, incredible as it may seem, lifted him up bodily, forced him against the stone railing of the bridge, and with apparent ease tilted him suddenly over and threw him head foremost into the water.

And all this time, mark you, there was on the young divine's face an expression of the most apostolic good humor and kindness. He seemed to do all this because there was nothing else to be done, and he did not follow up his victory any further than was necessary.

The big tramp crawled out of the water, sputtering and cursing, and went off into the woods again, followed by the other two. They plainly had had enough of that sort of amusement for the present. Mr. Grace gently raised the young lady and offered her his arm.

"Were you going to the Center?" he asked. "You must let me go with you. You are a good deal shaken—and no wonder."

So he walked along with her, talking kindly and courteously; and insisted, too, upon seeing her back safely over the bridge and up the hill again. As he took leave of her a short distance from the farm, he said:

"Tell Mrs. Martin, please, that I shall come over to see her next week—Monday, perhaps. And when we are more regularly and better acquainted, I want you to let me give you some lessons in shooting. There are so many rough characters along the road now, that ladies ought never to go out alone unarmed."

This is not a love story at all, so I shall omit a description of the four weeks following this adventure with the tramps—merely mentioning that during that time Miss Kate became an accomplished pistol shot, that she and Mr. Grace were very much together, and that (as a matter of course) they fell very much in love with each other. Of this last fact, however, the parson himself never dreamed. It does take some time to find out that there is really no such thing as platonic friendship! It is certain, at least, that young Grace would not have found out he was in love with Miss Wildwyl had it not been for a second adventure they had together.

It was a warm evening in November. Kate was to go back to her city home the next day, and Mr. Grace had come over and taken tea at the farm. The two were in the doorway together. He was to see her again on the morrow; but, somehow or other, both felt that this was the real leave-taking. Mr. Grace was leaving thus early because he wished to stop about some church business at Mr. Gardiner's.

As they stood there in the moonlight he took a square parcel from his pocket.

"Miss Kate," he said, a little embarrassed, "I want to give you something to remember me by. I am sure this will recall many pleasant times. Will you take it?"

Miss Wildwyl looked a little puzzled.

"That depends upon what it is," she said, mischievously.

He removed the paper from the package, disclosing a rosewood box, from which, having unlocked it, he took an elegant little revolver, gold-mounted, with a pearl handle. She uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Take it!" she cried. "Of course I'll take it; and use it, too, if it is ever necessary."

"I can testify that you know how to do so," he answered. "Yet I trust you will never have occasion—that is, in that way. It is an awful thing to take human life. I was sorely tempted to do it once—that day when I saw you in the hands of that tramp. But I put my revolver away and used my fists instead. And I have always been glad of it since."

There were many other things said, of course; but nothing to the real point, as there ought to have been. And the parson finally went away, leaving Miss Kate, as I have already said, very much disappointed that he had not proposed to her—and feeling very much dissatisfied himself, though he scarcely knew why.

She had walked down to the stile with him and stood there under the mulberry tree watching him out of sight down the road. It was some minutes before she turned to go in again; and, just as she did so, she heard voices from the shadows on the opposite side of the road. She lingered a moment to listen. It was a low, gruff voice that she heard and she recognized it in an instant. She could distinguish the words plainly—"There is no hurry," the man was saying. "We'll hang back till he gets to the top of the hill. Then we'll rip her

up and overtake him just as he gets to the bridge. That's where he gets me such a crack, curse him! I'll pay him fur that, to-night." Then the men—she could see that there were three of them—went off at a moderate pace, and she understood that they were on the track of another person, and with a deadly purpose.

She did not tremble now, nor sink to the ground. It was not herself that was in danger, but the man she loved!

She hurried down the road after the men. They went straight past Mr. Gardiner's. Heaven grant that Mr. Grace had stopped there! But no! there were no lights in the house. Kate knocked loudly and tried the door. It was fastened, and nobody seemed to be at home. She remembered, now, that there was to be a political meeting at the Center that night. Probably they had all gone. She looked along the road as it ran up the hill. The moon was bright in the sky, but the road was dark with the shadows of the trees that stood on either side.

Mr. Grace could not yet have reached the top of the hill. If she could only cry out to him—but he was too far off for that. And the tramps were between him and her. She must get by them somehow, and in order to do that she must leave the road. Luckily, the road bent a little as it ran down the hill again. There was a path through the woods going around the hill, and coming out just this side of the bridge.

Breathlessly, swiftly, she flew along through the woods, heedless of rocks, and bushes, and brambles. It seemed a year—it was really only a few moments—before she was around on the other side of the hill and approaching the road. Her heart was beating painfully, and it seemed as though she must stop for the pain in her side. She moved more slowly, opening her box, which she still retained in her hands, and taking out the revolver as she went. There was a box of cartridges there, too, all complete, and she took out two of them and placed them in two of the chambers. The rest, together with the pistol-case, she let drop as she lumbered along.

She was at the roadside now and climbing the wall. She could hear the parson whistling softly to himself as he strode along. And then as he came out into the broad moonlight at the bridge, she saw a dark form close behind him.

She uttered a shriek and sprung over the wall. Her sudden appearance just then was unfortunate. It called Mr. Grace's attention to her, and prevented his hearing the stealthy step behind. Kate was in agony. She saw a heavy bludgeon lifted in the air—another instant and it would stretch her brave parson senseless. But in that instant the revolver had been cocked, aimed and fired, and the villain himself lay groaning on the ground. It was a perfect shot—all the woman in her had risen to the occasion, and not a nerve had failed her, not a muscle given way.

Mr. Grace was standing stock-still, very naturally a good deal astonished. Then a figure he knew sprung to his side and placed the little pearl-handled revolver in his hand.

"There is one more shot in it," she cried, excitedly, and she looked like a fierce, beautiful amazon in the moonlight. If persons could fight for women, women could fight for persons, too, at need.

But, the second shot was not needed. The big ruffian lay dead upon the ground, and his companions, with commendable prudence, had retreated altogether at the first fire.

Mr. Grace turned to Miss Wildwyl, and at last seemed to comprehend matters. Something else flashed through his mind, too, in that wonderful moment—that this glorious young woman was adorable and that he adored her. He opened his arms and spoke her name softly, sweetly—as he had never spoken it before. The next instant the amazon had disappeared, entirely, and it was only a weak, trembling woman that lay in his arms. And he was kissing her pale lips and face with all the passion of a parson's first love.

A PROMISE.

BY JOHN GOSSET.

If thou wilt trust Him, thou shalt feel,
In after days, how great a care
He kept thee—borne these perilous gulfs
Whereof thy soul was unaware.

And thou wilt thank Him, looking back,
Because He made thy way so free
From galling griefs—and, giving thanks,
Shalt, looking thus, no sorrow see!

Base-Ball.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

THE PROFESSIONAL ARENA.

The career of the Hartford club team during the closing part of the season, presents a practical illustration of the importance of getting a team to work together as a whole. In the opening month of the base-ball year the Hartforders alternately tried Bond and Cummings as their regular pitchers. Unlike other nines in the arena the Hartforders have this season had two "regular" pitchers, the other nines having but one regular occupant of the position and a "change" pitcher. Of course a rivalry sprung up in the Hartford team as a result of this position of affairs, and in the early period of the season what may be called the "Bond clique" had the best of it, inasmuch as he had better support given him, apparently, or, at any rate, more united efforts to aid him were accorded. Toward the middle of the season, however, discordant elements began to show themselves in the Hartford team, and finally in the latter part of August the trouble culminated in the Bond and Ferguson dispute, and the former was thrown overboard, and Jonah-like he was swallowed by the Boston whale. From this time forth the Hartforders prepared themselves to go in and give their only remaining pitcher that united support which all along had been the only thing wanting to have placed the Hartforders in the van, or at least nearer the goal in the pennant race than they had previously reached. Under such circumstances it is not at all surprising to see them closing the season as occupants of second place in the championship contest, this result being due simply to their going in unitedly to play for the side, something they had done before only by spasmodic efforts. The lesson is one which should not be lost sight of by club managers, especially by those who fancy that when they have secured the services of this or that noted pitcher and catcher with a strong assisting corps, that therefore they have obtained a team that will carry off the coveted prize. A sample of the improved play of the Hartford nine was shown on the occasion of their eighth and last game of the season with the Mutual nine, played Oct. 17th, in Brooklyn, on which occasion they defeated the Mutuals—who were assisted by Force of the Athletics and Seward of the New

Havens—by 3 to 0, the latter only scoring two base-hits off Cummings' pitching in the entire game. We never saw the Hartforders work together so harmoniously as in this contest. No wonder they played as they did.

A NEW MOVEMENT.

We have had the appended circular sent us with a request to publish it. It is addressed to the managers of semi-professional clubs throughout the country and tells its own story.

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 23, 1876. GENTLEMEN:—The time has undoubtedly arrived when non-League base-ball clubs should be making their preparations for the ensuing year, and the object of this circular is to obtain the views and suggestions of all who are interested in the welfare of the national game, especially that portion of it which pertains to so-called "semi-professional" clubs. As the present season is about at an end, it behooves us, for mutual protection, to be up and doing. We should go systematically to work to remedy the evils that beset us during the past, and also to take some action in regard to the League, the few clubs composing which seem to be so anxious to have a monopoly of the business, and to dictate terms to the hundreds of good clubs outside its code of laws. It will not take long to convince any man of common sense that, if the first-class non-League clubs will band together, with rules as stringent as those of the old or organization—binding not only on the players, but on their employers also—an association can be formed larger and stronger than any that has ever existed in this country. Such an association should be formed at as early a day as practicable; and, in order to start the ball, I would respectfully suggest that you, in replying, detail your views especially as to when and where a convention should be held, the number of delegates you think advisable from each club, etc. As soon as I have learned the preferences of the numerous organizations, and whether a majority of them are in favor of cutting loose from any and all associations that may at present exist, and whether they are in favor of forming a new one, as here referred to, notification will be given such clubs as are in sympathy with the new movement, and we can then arrange for holding a convention, at which the necessary constitution and by-laws can be drawn up. In my opinion, the League should be allowed to monopolize the high-salary business. In forming our association, it strikes me that two of the most essential points to be carried out are these: under no circumstances whatever should we play League clubs, and only twenty-five cents admission should be charged to our games. It has been practically demonstrated this season that non-League clubs can play every bit as pretty a game of ball as their older rivals; and when but half-price is charged, we are sure to receive our share of public patronage. While these theories are advocated by the "St. Louis Reds," that club, of course, will at all times give way to the opinion of the majority; should it be contrary to theirs. Please give this matter careful consideration, and be kind enough to let me hear from you at your earliest convenience. Respectfully and fraternally,

L. C. WAITE.
Secretary St. Louis Red Stocking B. B. C.

THE PENNANT RECORD.

By way of showing the result of the contest between the Hartford and St. Louis nines for second position in the pennant race we give below the record of how the clubs stand in the three positions they may be said to occupy, and as they now stand by the full record, as they stand by the throwing out of the Athletic and Mutual games, and as they would stand were the Cincinnati games to be thrown out.

Clubs.	Chicago.	Hartford.	St. Louis.	Boston.	Games won.	Games lost.	Games won.	Games won.	Games won.
Hartford.	4	0	4	6	9	23	9	4	36
St. Louis.	6	0	6	6	34	2	6	38	7

By the full record of all the games played in the League arena to Oct. 16, the Chicago club win first place by their record of 52 victories; the St. Louis second place, by 46; and the Hartford third, by 44. Throwing out the Mutual and Athletic games, the record stands as follows: Chicago 35, Hartford 33, and St. Louis 31. Now, suppose Cincinnati should fail to play their tenth game with the St. Louis nine, and thereby the Cincinnati record be thrown out, the three clubs would then stand as follows: Chicago 28, St. Louis 24, and Hartford 23. It would, in such case, be necessary for the Hartforders to win both the games yet to be played with the Boston to exceed the St. Louis score of victories, and to win at least one game to tie the St. Louis score. This is the only circumstance now in the way of Hartford's success.

By the same rule which obliges the League directors to throw out the Athletic and Mutual club games, those of the Cincinnati must be thrown out, if they fail to play their tenth game with the St. Louis nine, as the Western papers say they probably will do.

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A few Advertisements will be inserted on this page at the rate of fifty cents per line, nonpareil measurement.

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WHY THEY COULDN'T AGREE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

For something like eleven years I've been your faithful wife. The greatest part of all that time you've spent in making strife. I never gave a party, Jones, to honor both of us. But just for convenience sake you'd raise a mighty fuss.

If I would get a new silk dress to look respectable And over all your neighbors' wives to cut a bigger swell. And get a bonnet that would dim all others in the town. All for the sake of honoring you, you know you'd fret and frown.

If I would buy a carpet fine to ornament the room. Although I sewed your buttons on, you'd straighten to fume. And though I let my own work go to darn your stockings, Jones. If I would buy a watch and chain there was thunder in your tones.

I loved to wear the best of shawls to make you proud of me. And then the way you met my bills was horrible to see. When I would go to opera only to show you off—For I was very proud of you—you'd always growl and scold.

You never thanked me yet for all that I have done for you. I've labored all day long to learn piano pieces new; I've worked hard all the mornings just to put my hair in style. So you might joy to look at me, and show it with a smile.

I've slaved myself for years for you, and then no thanks I get; I work on tides all the day, rare poodle-dogs to knit. And hours I spend in "brodering, and toll my life away. In making waxwork leaves and flowers 'r marvels in crochet.

I'll die before my time has come, worn out by over-work. And for the sake of living I must struggle like a Turk. In victuals I economize and starve myself and you. To give unto the charity fairs as haughtier people do.

It is the hardest work a poor wife ever had to do. Just for her husband's sake to keep up with the fashions new; And if I didn't fix up fine you know what would be said. I'd bring discredit on myself, and also on your head.

And yet you just get up and growl at everything I do. There is no wife just like myself nor husband just like you. And this has got to stop now, Jones, or you will shortly see Some trouble in this camp, because we never can agree.

Yankee Boys in Ceylon:

OR,

THE CRUISE OF THE FLYAWAY.

BY C. D. CLARK.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WILDERNESS," "ROD AND RIFLE," "CAMP AND CANOE," ETC.

X.—FIRE IN THE JUNGLE. HOMEWARD BOUND.

THEY were now without a guide, since the Charmer had bid good-by to earth, and in a part of the jungle which they were not acquainted. Yet they were old woodsmen, and had no doubt, by the aid of the compass, to be able to reach their old camp, or, at least, some part of the country where they had been before. They would not leave the body of the Charmer to the tender mercies of the wild dogs and jackals, and although they had little time to spare, they selected a crevice in the ravine, laid the body tenderly upon a pile of aromatic leaves, piled the stones high above it, and left it there alone. Then, slowly and sadly, they took their weapons and marched, Sawyer taking the lead.

"I only wish we had Pete now," said the sailing-master, looking up at the sky. "I never was in this place before, and I don't feel quite certain of the latitude. But a compass will fetch us out straight, I reckon."

"Don't you think it is clouding up some?" said Richard.

"It looks smoky to the east," replied Sawyer. "I don't understand it myself, but I judge we'd better hump along as lively as we can, or we may get into trouble."

For a mile or two they were able to follow their own course back, and then they lost the trail. The atmosphere was very oppressive. They were sensible of a husky feeling in the throat, a weight upon the lungs, and a feathery dust fell about them. Sawyer wet his finger and took up some of the dust which fell upon his arm, and tasted it.

"Ashes!" he said, quietly. "By George, boys, there is a big fire in the jungle, somewhere."

"It can't be our jungle!" queried Richard, anxiously.

"I don't know; seems as if it was, because there is little wind, and these ashes would not travel very far, light as they are. But, see here, if the fire is between us and the river, what shall we do?"

"Turn back and get to the rocks," said Ned. "It must be the best way, but there is a heap of dry grass between the rocks, and I don't know how safe we would be there. If I knew how the river run, we might get to some bend and lay in the water until it passed. Hu! look there!"

They looked ahead, and there, scarcely a mile distant, they caught the red flashes among the trees which told that the fire was coming like a race horse. As they turned back, scarcely knowing which way to fly, they heard the clear blast of a bugle which the captain had given to Rona, a mile to the north.

"There is the gal," cried the captain. "Good Heaven! what is she doing here?"

"Answer her quickly," cried Richard. "As she is here, she is as well with us as anywhere else."

Sawyer raised his fingers to his lips and whistled shrilly. The whistle sounded through the woods in the distance, and soon the beat of hoofs was heard, and Rona, her hair floating back from her shapely head, and her eyes wild, dashed up to them, mounted upon the swiftest horse in the camp.

"Why are you here?" said Sawyer, reproachfully. Was it not enough that our lives are in danger, but you must come to share it?"

"Where is my father?" she demanded. Every head drooped. Not one of that party of brave fellows dared to tell her that her father was gone.

"You do not speak," she said, faintly. "Is he dead? Has the brave heart ceased to beat? Has the man who was once a prince in his own land, fallen at last? Oh, my father! my father! Why was I not by to die with you? Where shall I go? which way shall I turn, now that I am alone?"

The captain took from his bosom the leaf which the Charmer had pressed into his hand before he died. She read it quickly, pressed it to her lips, and put it into her bosom.

"You are my master," she said, humbly. "I will obey his dying words, but I fear that there is little hope for us. If you had horses

you might get to the river in time, but the fire is too close."

"You, at least, may be saved," replied Sawyer, hoarsely. "The horse is swift and will carry you to the high rocks two miles above. Do you know the way?"

"Do you think I will fly and leave you here?" said Rona. "Never will I leave you, never will I fly unless you, too, can be saved."

"I order you to fly!" She leaped from the saddle and struck the horse a blow upon the flank. He sprang away at once, and Rona turned back, with a bright smile.

"You have destroyed yourself," the captain said. "Why have you done this?"

"Come," she replied. "If there is a chance of life, I will share it with you; if there is none we will die together."

"She can't keep up with us," said Ned. "Take one hand and I will take the other, and we will help her along."

"There is not one in the party who can beat me," replied Rona. "There is one chance for us, and only one. Follow me, and swiftly."

She took the lead and ran on before them, with the grace and speed of a young antelope, the others following at their best speed. It was not the jungle itself that was burning, but the dry grass and fallen trees and branches which covered the ground. On all sides of them they saw the denizens of the jungle flying for their lives. Furious beasts, which would have assailed them boldly at any other time, fled by at furious speed. Wild dogs, jackals, leopards, tigers, even elephants, went crashing through the jungle. Deer and elk, with blazing eyes, and antlers thrown back on their shoulders, fled past them as they ran. And

scarcely half a mile behind them, a wall of flame, forty feet in height, mixed with rolling columns of smoke, was racing down upon them. They heard the death-screams of wild animals, caught in the jungle, and dying in the midst of the flames. The hot breath of the tempest was in their ears, and the ashes fell about them in blinding showers.

"On, on," cried Rona. "Stop not now, for your lives."

Will was lagging behind, being the poorest runner in the party. Richard turned back, caught his hand and dragged him on. But the lad was panting for breath, and had not much more run in him.

"Leave me," he gasped. "I can't keep it up, but you may be saved. Tell them at home that I died game."

"Come back, Ned," cried Richard. "Take his right hand and help him along. How is that, Will, my boy?"

"Better, for the time; but I am nearly beat."

"Keep it up; never say die, Will," said Ned, encouragingly. "By George, there is the water."

A quarter of a mile in front they caught the gleam of water through the trees. The sight of that haven encouraged Will, and he ran on with more courage. But that wall of fire was creeping ominously close, and the water yet seemed far away.

"If there is only a morass between us and the water, we shall be all right," gasped Sawyer. "Hurrah; we are almost there."

"So is the fire," said Dick. "Good; this green grass won't burn very easily."

"There is dry grass under it," replied Sawyer, as they ran across the sort of meadow between them and the water. Go on; I am going to stay here and start a counter-fire."

"No, no," said Richard. "Go on!" thundered Dave. "Am I always to be contradicted in this way?"

"I will stay with you," said Rona, as the rest ran on.

"Rona," replied the sailor. "When your father was dying, he made me promise that I would watch over you. I told him that I loved you and would guard you from all evil. I tell you now that I am all right if you will go on. If we live, you are to be my wife."

He caught her to his breast and kissed her, and then pointed to the water. She hesitated a moment, and then, covering her face, ran after the rest. He walked after her in a leisurely manner, looking over his shoulder at the wall of flame rolling up, scarcely a hundred yards distant. But he made no attempt to start his fire until Rona was so close to the water that she was out of danger, when he pulled some dry grass, lighted it with a match, and ran up and down, lighting the dry grass under the green at various points. It started with astonishing velocity, and he was forced to dash through the wall of flame which his own hand had made, in order to reach the water. As it was the flames were close at his heels before he reached the water into which he dashed to put out his burning clothes. Luckily, at this point, there was very little except grass, and that very green at the top. The fire which he had started cleared out the dry grass beneath, and spread out to the right and left, and they stood in the water watching it. The great wall which had pursued them so long, reaching the place where he had kindled his fire, spread out to the right and left, but could do them no great harm. But they were in an oven. All about them blazing pyramids ran up toward the zenith, as the flames ran up the high trees, catching the dry tendrils of the vines, and shriveling up the great leaves of the huge talipot trees like tinder. They were not in the river, but in one of those strange "banks" which are frequented by the huge animals of the island in the heat of the day. As far out as they could see, the water was dotted with moving forms. Elephants, with only their huge backs and heads rising above the water; stately elks, cheek by jowl with the tiger and leopard, their traditional foes; and the jackal and red deer standing or swimming side by side.

These animals never noticed that their enemy, man, had taken refuge with them in the water. Again and again great trees, sapped at the roots by the fire, came tumbling down into the water, sending clouds of steam into the air, as the flame went out with a sharp hiss. Some of these trees fell ominously near the party crouching in the water but did not strike them. The heat grew so intense that they were forced to bury their heads beneath the surface, only leaving their lips and nostrils exposed, and spreading wet handkerchiefs over their faces, after cutting breathing-holes in them. But at length the fire passed on, and they stepped out upon the smoldering bank, and looked about them on a scene of utter desolation. Only the huge trunks of the talipot trees, and liquidambers remained and these bare, leafless, scorched and blackened. Never had the young men been witness of such a gloomy scene, and the tears stood in the eyes of Rona.

"It was a beautiful land and he loved it well," she said, sadly. "Now that we are safe, I can weep for the dead. The prophet spoke truly when he said that he would die by the tiger. Do you know what he wrote upon the talipot-leaf?"

"No," replied Sawyer. "He made me very happy by saying that you loved me and gave you to me."

She put the piece of leaf into his hand and he read there in Hindostanee:

"Light of my eyes, Abenhu, once a prince in Kandy, bids you farewell. I have said that you love me, and he loves you. Give yourself to him without fear, and he will make you his wife and go with you to the land beyond the sea. Let his faith be your faith, his God, your God. Be a true wife to him, and forget not the man who has loved you, and will never see your face again. This is your father's last request, dying in the arms of the man who loves you."

"Listen to me, Rona," said Sawyer. "I'm a rough man, but a true one. If you do not care enough for me to be my wife, go with me as my sister, and my old mother will give you a home."

"My father's wish would be my law," replied Rona, simply. "But I love you, and will go with you to the ends of the earth."

They waited until the earth had cooled sufficiently to allow them to pass over it and then began to make their way toward the river. Night came upon them before they reached it, but Rona guided them well, and at midnight they reached the camp, where they found the Coolies huddled together, mourning for the kind master they had lost forever. They were overjoyed as they came into camp, but their joy turned into mourning again when they heard that Abenhu was dead. The next day they were on their way out of the jungle, which had not been touched by the fire on this side of the river. As they were in camp they heard a terrible clamor on the road to the first Cingalese village, not far away, and soon were met by half-naked men, coming to ask their aid. The terrible "Rogue" had charged through their fields and killed two men.

"Let us do one good deed before we leave these people forever," suggested Sawyer. "Leave the spare horses with the coolies, and let us ride hard."

It was a breakneck gallop of several miles, the active villagers running with them. At last they came out of the jungle, and looked down into the level plain, in which the village stood. The "Rogue" was still at work, tramping through the fields, dashing down the rude huts, and charging the Kandians whenever they dared approach. His shrill trumpet announced that he was very angry, and as he saw the horsemen he turned suddenly and came down at his best speed, willing and ready to meet them.

"Spread out, boys!" commanded Sawyer. "It is our last hunt in Ceylon."

They separated, and rode upon the monster from different points, but all upon the same side. Then ensued a strange hunt, one which they had never enjoyed before. The great beast charged again and again, but the fleet horses eluded him, and at last he stood, no longer able to charge, glaring defiance at them. Then they rode in nearer, dismounted, and fired together. The "Rogue" staggered, his trunk went down, and he fell like a ruined tower, while the Kandians leaped upon the body, thrust it with their spears and exulted over their dead enemy. Then, amid the blessing of the villagers, the party rode on toward the port, where the Flyaway was waiting for them, fitted for her voyage. They remained three days in Colombo, and a missionary, on his way to China, made Sawyer and Rona man and wife. Then they sailed for the China seas to seek new adventures before they turned the prow of the Flyaway toward the far-distant West. And before they again sailed into the placid waters of the Delaware the fleet schooner had dipped her prow in every sea which rolls around the globe, coming home by Cape Horn.

They had many adventures, and some day it may be my fortune to tell you what they saw and did, in the voyage from Ceylon to their home. For the present, we bid the Elephant-Hunters good-by.

THE END.

Old Coomes' Experiences as an Amateur Hunter and Sportsman are told in his

ADRIPT ON THE PRAIRIE.

the opening paper of which is given in our next issue. It is a delightful series of papers, giving the realities of sporting life as well as its romance; and those who have followed the Boys in Ceylon in their adventures will delight to go with the "Boys" in their vacation recreation with rifle and mustang, out on the Plains.

Settling Scores.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

ONE might stand and gaze and hold one's breath with awe. There were majestic trees going up until their tops seemed lost in the clouds; walls of rock stretching heavenward in a straight course for hundreds of feet; canyons so deep that God's sunlight never reached the bottom where the stream, which was scarcely more than a thread, the insignificant cause of that yawning chasm in the basaltic walls, flowed on with a quietness which did not hint of the power it had during a few weeks of the year to rage and toss its foamy mane and work the destruction of every perishable object which came in its course. There was a valley lying in emerald slope bathed in golden ether for peaceful contrast, and beyond it a massive range whose bristling peaks were lost in the blue haze which clung like a perpetual veil about those rugged heights. There were the rude cabins of a little party of pocket-miners, tall, gaunt, unshorn men, whose wildness of aspect was in unison with all their surroundings. And there were half a dozen tourists, beaux fresh from Fifth Avenue drawing-rooms, and belles from Beacon street, like foreign birds of brilliant plumage dropped unawares in a land which knew them not.

"The young lady from Boston"—there was only one despite my use of the plural above—stood poised on a slippery abutment, giving utterance to numerous little ejaculations of mingled delight and nervousness, and casting bewildering glances at the bronzed features and bushy beard that were visible under the slouch-hat shading a pair of clear and comprehensive eyes, belonging to Miner Blake.

"It's nice," pronounced Miss Antrim, with a long breath before that feminine adjective. "Cousin Rick, you were perfectly justified in saying this was worth coming out of the usual route of Western travel to see. I'll reward you with a lively sense of gratitude if we ever get back without breaking our necks. Oh, you're sure I won't fall?" to her companion.

"Flattered," said cousin Rick, complacently. "If you're afraid and want more help to hold you up there, I'll see what I can do for you, Rose." There was concealed malice in that generous offer, for the only disengaged gentleman of the party was Valentine Brooke, with whom Rose had been sparring ever since they had come face to face in the Yosemite Valley, and he had agreed to cast in his lot with them.

It was chiefly because he had opposed this side-junt that Rose had cast the vote which decided the party to come here.

"There is no route in the world which throws more obstacles in the way of the traveler," said Brooke. "There are miles of bridge-path where even the mules are likely to pitch headlong down precipices where none but wild beasts will ever find them. The mountains are full of dangers, and the plateaus are literally gashed with chasms which make the hardships of travel quite too great for ladies' endurance."

"Oh, if Mr. Brooke don't wish to meet with the inconveniences," said Rose, fragmentarily, but significantly. "Rick, I hope you know your caliber well enough to be sure that we can walk where you brave men do not fear to tread."

Val flushed to the eyebrows at the imputation of cowardice flung at him, and from that moment left Miss Antrim as untrammelled by attentions from him as she could have asked.

If any one had told Rose that she had fastened upon Miner Blake, and was flirting with him prodigiously through sheer vexation, she undoubtedly would have resented the charge. But it is true that she turned her shoulder upon Rick after his offer, and gave a more gracious ear to Blake's speeches. He was a fine specimen of hardy manhood, grizzled by exposure rather than time, and he was proving himself a serviceable guide.

No notch in the whole range, no deserted camp, or lucky diggings, or blood-stained trail of which Tom Blake had not the story ticketed and put snugly away in his memory, but it was only on rare occasions like the present that he was ever drawn out.

He has his story, depend upon it," said Rose, as they sat around a tablecloth spread upon the grass at a later hour. "He is gentlemanly and intelligent, one of Nature's noblemen, I am sure. I would like to know what makes him follow this kind of life."

"Pocket-mining can't be very remunerative, judging by appearances; so it's hardly greed of gold," said Rick. "You can make a romance out of whole cloth, coz, and top off the climax something in this way:

"He struck the rowels in his steed; He said—'My love, farewell, indeed.' And turned to go at fastest speed. When to his joy she cried—'Oh, come back, come back! my heart is thine, No popinjay can take the shine. From you, my hero of the mine, I'll be your willing bride—oh!'"

"It's very well for you to sneer at humble merit, Rick," cried Rose, flaring up. "But let me tell you, I would any time rather trust my future to a man who has tried his stability as a man than any of your milk-and-water chums, with their flaccid muscles and supreme egotism, and no higher ambition on earth than to seem bored to death, whether they are hanging in the train of Miss Beau Monde at home or surrounded by such magnificence of scenery as we have here. My hero of the mine, as you choose to call him, has the soul to appreciate this which they have not."

It was a plain home thrust which no one present could fail to perceive. Val looked across at her with a shadowy smile.

"Laying claim to the flaccid muscles and supreme egotism," said he, "as one of Rick's milk-and-water chums, I tender Miss Antrim my grateful thanks. True friends, like good physicians, never shrink in using the scalpel which lays bare our faults."

Rose was in a rage that her little blow, failing to penetrate any vital point, had glanced off harmlessly from Val's serene complacency. She started up abruptly, fearing to trust herself further away.

"Whither away?" asked Rick. "Up Jacob's ladder to the ledge. That view haunts me. If I could paint it I would ask no higher happiness on earth."

"Jacob's ladder; is that what they call it? Strikes me a fellow would have a rough time of it going up to heaven that way."

"Mr. Blake says he never knew but one man to climb it further than the ledge, and he was a demon. What that meant I don't pretend to say."

The little party below watched the trim figure go up the well defined steps which led to the ledge, then returned to their talk and their luncheon, and several minutes passed before any one of them looked again.

"Why," said Rick, then, "has Rose drawn her gaby up there already, and got him to try the feat—No?"

A man toward whom all eyes were drawn was seen coming down the perilous upper portion of the rude stair in the wall. The ease and rapidity of his motions were due to the support of a knotted rope which he seemed to pay out as he descended. It was not their guide, for he stood planted with his back to a tree, out of earshot of the little party.

Rose, quite unconscious of the stranger's scout and waved it to her friends below. Two strong hands from behind suddenly took hold of her wrists, and with a twist of the scarf bound them firmly together. Then her waist was encircled by a brawny arm, she was lifted from her feet and borne, shrieking, up the same perilous way her captor had descended!

The audacity of the act struck those below dumb. As the first scream reached his ear, Tom wheeled and stood staring with a strange look at the spectacle. He had drawn his revolver mechanically, but stood with the weapon in his hand making no attempt to use it.

"Is the man mad? Do you know him? What does it mean? What shall we do? Shoot the scoundrel before he gets away."

Blake dropped his gaze to the excited group surrounding him, and drew a long breath. "If I were to shoot him he'd drop the gal. No, he ain't mad any more's devilishness makes any man so. I do know him, and I'll have his life yet, if I'm twenty years doing it."

It was no time for questioning, but every one there recognized the animosity conveyed in his fierce, low tones, and knew that those two Westerners were enemies to the death.

Blake stopped the confused suggestions which were being made him. "It ain't no use to talk of following Black Jake up that path. Why, misers! I seen him shin up there once when he had no rope to help him, with two heads of dust tied to his belt and half a dozen of the boys trying to let daylight through his carcass. Me and my pard had struck a find and meant to quit the business; with our pile, when the dirty sneak-thief robbed the camp and got away up that very track. It's not the only grudge I've got ag'in him."

"And Rose, poor child! is in such a man's power, while we stand talking here! What can be done?"

Blake was tightening his belt and looking to his rifle while he gave his hurried directions. "Take your women back to the camp, and get the boys there to turn out and hunt the mountain. I'll strike his trail and bring the gal back safe, if it can be done, but he's too tricky to be easy caught. No, I don't want none of you to hinder me."

"I will be no hindrance," said Val Brooke, quietly, and with no further announcement of his intention, he moved away by the miner's side.

Poor, frightened, tenderly-reared Rose! It

was one thing to dream of romantic adventures, and another to be the distressed heroine of one.

It was midnight in the mountains. There were stealthy rustlings in the chaparral which made her shrink and shiver. Her arms ached from the ligature but lately removed from her wrists, and her soul recoiled in terror from the brutal force with which her conductor had urged her forward, half-carrying and half-dragging her along. He had evaded the pursuers by lowering her with the rope into the canyon, and following, with the agility for which he was noted, down the almost perpendicular side. He had left the chasm finally, and after hours of weary travel, poor Rose was allowed to sink down in the utter prostration which follows overpowering fatigue.

She still wore her watch and rings, a little to her own surprise. She had frantically tried to buy her freedom with them at an earlier hour, but beyond some warning growls enjoining silence and cautions regarding her steps, Black Jake had scarcely spoken to her on the way, and had totally ignored her demands to know where she was being taken and for what purpose.

He approached her now and held out a horny hand. "Fork over."

Rose took off the jewelry in trembling haste. "Then you are a common robber, after all," she exclaimed, indignantly. "You might have had these before and spared yourself your trouble. It was hardly worth while bringing me all this distance only to rob me at the last. Now that you have what you want, will you please take me back again?"

The assurance with which she put her request puzzled the man. "You've got true grit, since you're not afraid," said he. "But you're right; I don't mean any hurt to you. Don't try to get away or make any fuss, and I'll take you back safe, when I've shook him off your track."

"Him?—whom? What do you mean?" asked Rose, more alarmed than she cared to show. "Tom Blake." This with a scowl which turned her blood cold. "Unlucky Tom they call him; do you know why? Because he never sets himself to work for anything but I manage to be on hand to spile his plans for him. I've followed your lot close enough to see the shine he took to you and you to him, and I tell you before Tom Blake should hitch fast to any gal as cared for him, I'd send 'em both to 'clar this world's diggin' without much fear of 'em meetin' on 't'other side. Don't rile me, gal, and I'll set you on yer way to get back to the States, ef you'll shake 'em."

Poor little Rose! This, then, was where her pretty trifling with "one of Nature's noblemen" had landed her.

Night again. A louder rustle than that which told of some prowling creature in the close thickets of evergreen-oak which shut them in like a wall. Jake, smoking beside the fire, was upon his feet in an instant, his weapon in his hand, but the two muscular figures striding forward were in no manner dismayed by it. They were members of a roving banditti that infested the mountains, and one who bore himself with an air of command accosted Jake.

"Well, comrade! This is not the rendezvous where we were to meet. Do you know the fate we deal to traitors?"

"If I slip the cards, shoot, but don't say 'traitor' when Tom Blake's in the question."

"Do you know that you put the party on their guard, and lost us the best haul we'd had the chance of making in six months. Not to mention that you made your own and dodged shares."

"You're welcome to all I've got," stolidly. Rose, inspired with a terror of these newcomers greater than she had felt for their ruder associate, shrunk into the deeper shadows, but the keen black eyes of the Spanish-looking man who had spoken found her retreating.

"Oh, the girl! She ought to bring us something. Here, hold a light till I have a look at her."

He was striding across the intervening space, but Rose with a shrill cry fled in a panic before him.

"Blast the fool," growled Jake, not even moving out of his tracks. "I'd have spoke for her, but she's spiled her chances."

It was an unequal match of speed and strength, and in less time than it takes to tell, Rose was overtaken and held fast by the grasp of a strong arm. While Jake looked on, a movement in the brush beyond them caught his eye. He could see the crown of a man's hat over the bush. Like a flash his hand was up and a bullet went singing through the air.

"Sorry I hadn't time to tell you you were p'nting at the wrong man, but that's what I've had in store for you ag'in the time you thought you'd catch me napping, Tom Blake."

He had started forward as he made his coolly-exultant speech, but the words had scarcely passed his lips when he recoiled, transfixed by the steady glitter of Blake's confronting eyes.

"You ought to 'a' been sure the fellow's head was in the hat before you wasted your fire. *Thar!*" A second shot had ended the score between those two. Black Jake fell forward upon his face, quivered, and lay still in the freelight.

Meanwhile the aspect of affairs around had changed. Rose found herself released only to be caught in another clasp, but this time she was clinging to Val Brooke as if she would never let him go again.

"Rose! Found, thank God!"

"Oh, Val, Val, Val!"

"Dear Val" he was always afterward declared she said, but how could he be sure in that moment of excitement, when the two robbers were flying before the vengeful men who came breaking through the chaparral—miners following the same search who had joined them just at nightfall—and while Blake addressed them in a few hurried words:

"Boys," he said, "either him or me had got to go under. Is the lady all right? I thought Black Jake wouldn't have the conscience to hurt her. He put a bullet through the heart of another one of 'em, a little gal I was go